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THE DEAN'S HANDBOOK  
TO  
GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL



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*Photo.*

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*

GENERAL VIEW OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL FROM NORTH-EAST  
As seen from one of the Canon's Gardens

# THE DEAN'S HANDBOOK TO GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

BY THE VERY REV.

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ILLUSTRATED

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## PREFACE

*In this little handbook, the writer (save in a few special instances) has designedly omitted the usual notices of monuments devoid of public interest, he has ruled out all wordy descriptions of ordinary stained-glass windows, and generally takes no notice of objects which do not possess any remarkable architectural or historical features.*

*Attention, however, is specially directed to, and careful descriptions are given of well-nigh everything in this ancient abbey (cathedral) of real beauty and of historic interest.*

*One of Jane Austen's very commonplace, but at the same time very lovable heroines, Miss Catherine Morland, in Northanger Abbey, ingenuously confesses "that she likes nothing in the world so well as novels, particularly if horrid, and that she has always felt a profound compassion for historians, who only write books which they must be aware could be of no use but to torment children."*

*The writer of the present story of Gloucester Cathedral, aware that something akin to the sentiments of Miss Morland, perhaps unconsciously, colours the thoughts of a good many minds, gravely advises the reader to skip the first chapter of this little book, which deals with the very early history of Gloucester and its great church, and to start with Chapter II.*



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# A HANDBOOK TO GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORY OF THE CATHEDRAL

THERE is a curious document printed in Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, published in the middle of the seventeenth century (when Oliver Cromwell, as Lord Protector, ruled in England), called the "Memoriale." The original is lost, but an English translation of this "Memoriale," made as early as James I.'s reign, has come down to us. In this important document there is an interesting and striking notice of the beginning of Christianity in Gloucester immediately after the traditional conversion of King Lucius, who was apparently closely connected with the ancient city.

The "Memoriale" relates how a bishop and preachers were appointed in Gloucester as early as A.D. 189, and how King Lucius constituted Gloucester into an archiepiscopal see; other curious details are given in the "Memoriale." Dugdale repeats these, but expresses his doubts as to the authenticity of the story, "for which," he tells us, "he can give no certain warrant."

The story in the "Memoriale," strange though it may seem, has more authority than Dugdale, the great seventeenth-century historian, suspected.

Again to quote Dugdale. The famous monastic

historian, however, tells us he can with authority relate the fortunes of the Gloucester abbey after the coming of the Northmen. The relation in question for nearly four hundred years consists only in scanty memoranda drawn mostly from the abbey records compiled by Froucester, who ruled as Abbot of Gloucester in the reign of King Richard II.

Abbot Froucester begins by telling us that in the year of grace 681, Ethelred, King of Mercia, took up the work of his brother Wolphere, the first Christian King of Mercia, who enlarged and beautified the town of Gloucester, and laid the foundations of the monastery and abbey; but dying before his buildings were completed, his brother and successor, Ethelred, continued the good work, and in the first year of his reign made his kinsman, Osric, the viceroy. This Osric completed the building of the new monastery and its church, which latter was dedicated to S. Peter.

Over the new religious house Osric appointed his sister Kyneburg as abbess. She governed the monastery for twenty-nine years, and was buried in the church before the altar of S. Petronilla in the year 710. Osric, who had succeeded to the kingdom of Northumbria, died in 729, and was also buried in the church of S. Peter, near to his sister Kyneburg.

The Abbess Kyneburg was succeeded by Edburga, widow of Wolphere, King of Mercia; she reigned as Abbess of S. Peter for twenty-five years, and was interred in the abbey near her predecessor.

The third abbess mentioned in the chronicle bears the puzzling name of Eva or Gaffe. Neither of these names sounds English. She also, strangely enough, seems to have once been a Queen of Mercia. Abbess Eva died and was buried in the abbey, A.D. 767. At all events, it is clear that the three abbesses of S. Peter were personages of



exalted rank, and in their day and time bore the highest character for generosity and virtue.

It is probable that this first monastery of S. Peter's, Gloucester, was one of those curious mixed houses, composed of nuns and monks, under the rule of an abbess, similar to the famous religious house of Whitby in the days of the famous Abbess Hilda. A few other mixed or double religious houses existed in the early middle ages on the continent of Europe and in Ireland, under the supreme rule of an abbess.

After the death of Eva, in A.D. 767, war and tumult brought about the ruin of the monastery and church of S. Peter, and for some fifty years or more the holy house of Gloucester apparently lay desolate.

Beornwulf, King of Mercia, in A.D. 823, changed its form when he rebuilt the monastery, and placed in it secular clergy, for the most part married; these new dwellers in S. Peter's differed little in their way of life and dress from laymen, but lived under certain prescribed rules.

In A.D. 1022, under King Canute, the secular clergy were ejected, and acting under the advice of Wolfstan, Bishop of Worcester, Canute installed Benedictine monks in their place, but they seem to have been unpopular with the citizens of Gloucester, and scenes of violence, in which the citizens and dwellers in the monastery were concerned, do not seem to have been uncommon in the sacred precincts.

But the monastery and church, the home of these unpopular Benedictines, were destroyed, or partially destroyed, by fire apparently early in the eleventh century, and were rebuilt under the auspices of Aldred, Bishop of Worcester, and subsequently Archbishop of York. Aldred's new church was consecrated and dedicated to S. Peter in the seventh year of King Edward the Confessor's reign, A.D. 1048. Some of us believe that the eastern part of the

present cathedral was mainly Aldred's work. The revenues of the abbey were largely appropriated by Aldred and applied to other purposes. It is more than probable that the unprosperous condition of the newly consecrated Benedictine abbey was largely owing to the diminished and inadequate resources of the house.

We must here remark on the great and important position which the city of Gloucester occupied in the latter part of the tenth and especially the eleventh centuries. It was the scene of not a few of the stirring events in English history. Æthelflaed, the famous daughter of King Alfred, generally known as the "Lady of the Mercians," dying in her fortress of Tamworth, was brought to Gloucester for burial. The *Saxon Chronicle* tells us that her body lies at Gloucester within the east porch of S. Peter's church. Æthelflaed's nephew, "glorious" Athelstan, died in our city. During the greater part of the eleventh century, Gloucester appears as one of the three great meeting-places of the kingdom. In that age England had no one capital.

The king holds his court, and calls his people together, in various places. Only three places are specially marked out at which national assemblies are held, at the three great feasts of the Church. He would wear his crown at Winchester for the Easter feast, for the Pentecostal feast at Westminster, at the mid-winter feast (Christmas) at Gloucester. In these three centres, in the full pomp of kingship, the monarch would gather round him his Witan to share his counsels. The North appears to have been left out of this sequence of royal assemblies. We never hear of York, strangely enough, as a place of national meeting. This is especially noticeable during the reigns of Harthacnut, Edward the Confessor, William the Conqueror, and William Rufus: Gloucester in the eleventh century was emphatically a royal city. The gemots held

in Gloucester are endless, and some of them are among the most memorable in the history of England of the period.

One of these state assemblies is specially remarkable. In that great assembly of Christmas, A.D. 1085, the Conqueror wore his crown and, in the language of the chronicler, "had deep speech with his Witan;" the result of this "deep speech" was the memorable act which gave the account of his land. That account is known in English history as the Domesday Book. "It is one of the unique things," Freeman tells us, "we have in England. No other country has anything to set against our English record—nothing to set against our Domesday Book." It gave to the Conqueror an account of his land—how it was peopled, and by what men—"Not an ox nor a cow or a swine was left that was not set down" in that marvellous catalogue.

To return to our abbey. Under Aldred's auspices the church which he partly rebuilt did not flourish. The first Abbot Edric does not appear to have been an earnest or an able man, and he relinquished his post. His successor, Wolstan, neglected his charge, and for some unexplained reason left Gloucester and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he died. Possibly both these men were disheartened at the poverty of their house, for, as we have stated, much of the old possessions of the abbey had been taken away by Archbishop Aldred, and the Abbey Chronicle relates how, when Wolstan died, far away in Jerusalem, its numbers dwindled away, and only two monks and eight young boys made up the sum of the dwellers in the old monastery.

But Gloucester the city, under William the Conqueror, still held a high place in the kingdom; the great Norman king regularly came here at least once a year, and he

determined that the storied abbey and monastery, which had so sadly deteriorated, should be raised to a position fitting for the chief Home of Prayer of the third city in the realm.

King William the Conqueror restored most of the confiscated lands to the abbey, and acting under the advice of Osmond, the chancellor, appointed as abbot a man of rare energy and piety—one well known to him, who had been his friend and chaplain, Serlo. This was in the year 1072.

Serlo infused new life into the community, and set himself to rebuild, *circa* A.D. 1089, or, as some of us think, to complete the work begun under Aldred in Edward the Confessor's days.

The abbey was eventually finished, and formally dedicated in the year of grace 1100, and although in later years, as we shall see, the great church was a good deal changed and altered, according to the fashion of the times—substantially the glorious cathedral we now see and love is the same as the abbey of Serlo, completed in A.D. 1100.

We shall in the course of our little handbook describe the changes made in the pile of Serlo, when we come to dwell in detail on the various parts or divisions of the cathedral as we see it to-day.



## CHAPTER II

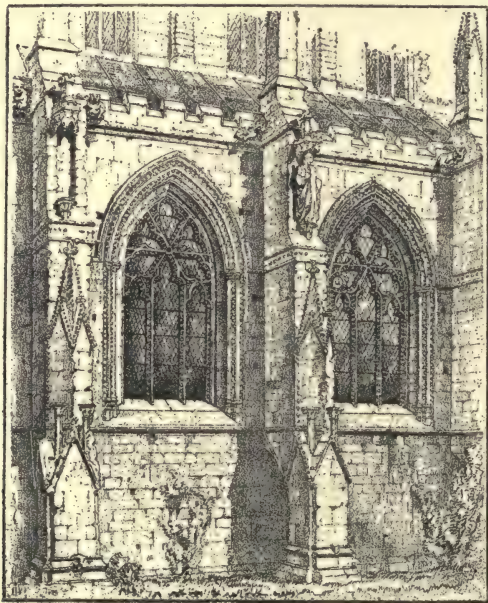
### THE EXTERIOR OF THE CATHEDRAL

LOOKING at Gloucester Cathedral from any of the best points of view—from the College Green, or the Cathedral Garden, from the windows of some of the canons' houses, from the dean's garden (the old Cloister Garth), on the north side of the great pile—the stranger visitor would at once pronounce the cathedral to be a creation of the Perpendicular building period of the second half of the fourteenth and of the fifteenth century. But looking more closely on the pale grey walls, and on the tracery of some of the windows, he would see much of an earlier age; for instance, if he stood among the grave-stones beneath the south wall of the nave, a row of stately "decorated" windows would meet the eye—evidently belonging to quite the earlier years of the fourteenth century. These beautiful decorated windows appear and reappear in various parts of the great House of Prayer.

Wandering eastwards, signs of a yet older style of building are apparent in the transepts; unmistakable signs of Norman-Romanesque work are visible in a large portion of the eastern limb of the cathedral, work which clearly dates from the latter half of the eleventh century, if not earlier.

But the general exterior aspect of the cathedral is that of a Perpendicular building. It is dominated by a noble tower of pure Perpendicular architecture, a tower simply unmatched for its massive beauty. The towers of Lincoln and Canterbury are somewhat loftier than that of Gloucester. These three rank high among the towers in

England—perhaps in Europe. But for grace and loveliness Gloucester stands first; it is a very marvel of richness combined with massiveness; and whether it is viewed from the dean's garden, out of which it seems to



DECORATED WINDOWS OF EARLY PART OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY

rise, or from the streets of the busy city, to which it appears to impart a feeling of religiousness—a reminder that something not of this world is in the midst of the every-day life—or from the meadows which encircle Gloucester—this glorious tower enchants, charms, rivets the eye.

It is of later date than most of the vast pile. When



*Photo.*

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*

THE NAVE OF GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL FROM THE WESTERN DOORS





the Wars of the Roses, late in the fifteenth century, desolated England, the scaffolding of the builders rose high above the city, and possibly Margaret of Anjou, the hapless Queen of Henry VI., on her fatal march past Gloucester to Tewkesbury, and her soldiers, were among the first who looked upon the still-unfinished white tower in the first hours of its unstained beauty. *Now*, some four centuries of Severn storms beating against it have painted the carved walls and soaring pinnacles with a tender silver grey which imparts a new strange beauty to its delicate and elaborate workmanship.

This tower will be described with some detail later.

## CHAPTER III

### THE NAVE

BUT any illusion that Gloucester Cathedral was mainly the work of a later period when Decorated or Perpendicular architecture, when Gothic in one form or other had replaced for ever the older Romanesque style, is dissipated when the threshold of the southern porch or of the great western doors is once crossed.

The stranger finds himself, as the outer portals close behind him, in a vast building which shows him what was a mighty Romanesque church of the first great building age of the awakening of the Church to new life.

No ornament of any kind serves to distract his attention, no vista of round arch piled on round arch, as at Peterborough, Norwich, or Durham, charms the eye with its confused beauty of detail. The nave of Gloucester is sternly, severely simple. Vast pillars, of most unusual height, support immense round arches, and above the round arches rises a small triforium and clerestory, which at first are hardly noticed. The vista of vast columns and the mighty round arches surmounting them completely fill the thoughts. Here we have a most conspicuous example of the round-arched style. There is no mistaking the school of thought which planned these: it is indeed Romanesque—some would say exaggerated Romanesque: nowhere in the world is there anything like them.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I except Tewkesbury Abbey, some ten miles north of Gloucester, but evidently Tewkesbury Abbey was built by the same Architectural School, probably by the same master of his craft who designed Gloucester. The Abbey of Tournus, near Dijon, some suppose was the model from which the master architect drew his inspiration of Gloucester.

It would be a misuse of language to call this singular and impressive Romanesque nave beautiful in the ordinary sense of the word. It is *not* beautiful, but it is something more, it is awe-inspiring. It suggests power, endurance, devotion, dread of the unseen world, the fear of God, rather than the love of God, and perhaps, more than any other great church in England, reveals to us the secret of these Norman-Romanesque architects who learned their craft in the early fervour of the religious age which produced Hugh, Abbot of Cluny, Hildebrand, afterwards known as Pope Gregory VII., and Lanfranc, the minister and adviser of William the Conqueror—in that age which culminated in the wild strange dream of the first and greatest Crusade.

The dry statistics of the wonderful nave are as follow: it is 174 feet long by  $34\frac{1}{4}$  feet broad; 67 feet 7 inches high. There is a somewhat dwarfed triforium or gallery running over the main arches. The original Norman clerestory and the flat trabeated wooden roof are gone. The present stone vaulted roof was the work of the monks in A.D. 1242, when a fire had destroyed the old flat painted wooden roof, which must have been far more effective. The results of this desolating fire are still visible in the vivid red stains in the lower parts of the huge columns which were stained by the burning rafters which fell from the roof.

The fourteen great pillars are 30 feet 7 inches in height, about twice the height of those at Norwich. These Norman pillars or piers have plain unadorned capitals. A cable moulding runs along just above the arches. The west end of the nave, probably on account of the falling of the western tower or towers, was reconstructed by Abbot Morwent in the style of his day (the Perpendicular), in A.D. 1421-1427.

. . . . .

The general aspect of this great nave, grand and massive though it be, is cold; not beautiful, as we have remarked, but impressive and solemn. At night, when brilliantly lit up, the cold dead appearance largely disappears, and it presents a character of rare and peculiar attraction. Still, viewed in daylight it certainly lacks something. It was not *thus* that Serlo its builder, the first Norman abbot, left it: it was not *thus* that the early mediæval abbots who followed Serlo were accustomed to see the nave of their noble abbey. From the twelfth century down to the date of the sad suppression of the renowned Benedictine House of the Severn lands, the *now* cold white nave glowed with colour and glittered with gold.

Nor is this merely the surmise of one who loves colour well: very carefully have the scarred dim traces of this vanished glory been searched out—with this result:—

“Painting and gilding were no doubt largely employed to ornament the ribs and bosses of the vaulting, the capitals of the columns, the various mouldings, the plain surfaces of the walls, the monumental effigies; and yet, comparatively speaking, few traces remain. This is mainly owing to this mode of enrichment having been obliterated by successive coats of whitewash.”<sup>1</sup>

Speaking of the remains of colouring on the vaulting put up after the disastrous fire of A.D. 1242 which had destroyed the original wooden roof of Serlo, which without doubt was richly coloured and gilded, our architect says, the vaulting shafts are marble, and the capitals, corbels, bosses, and mouldings were, without doubt, formerly painted. He then proceeds to describe exactly the painting in question, which he says must have been very rich.

<sup>1</sup> The words quoted here are taken from a report of Mr. Waller, senr., who for some forty years was resident architect of the cathedral, assisted from time to time, at his own request, by Sir Gilbert Scott, R.A., and by Mr. Pearson, R.A.



Traces of painting, this careful observer goes on to tell us, were also found on the huge columns or piers. A diapering of red stars can still be detected on the second pier from the east, on the north side of the nave. On the upper part of the west side of the corresponding column on the south were indications of a light canopy of wood or stone, fastened to the feet of the piers, the whole surrounded by painting, divided at intervals by bands enriched with *fleurs-de-lis* and emblems of the Trinity, and the interspaces diapered with the letters I· H· S· and M· with crowns over them.

Over the west door opening into the cloister from the north side of the nave are traces of twelve saints painted on the stone panels. The five crockets of the arch were certainly gilded.

On the main ribs of Serlo's original vaulting in this north aisle, vaulting which still remains intact, many stars, ornamental crosses, etc., and dark colouring in the hollows of the diagonal ribs remain. Although we are dwelling here on the nave, it will be well to mention, as we are dealing on the important question of mediæval colouring, that in many other parts of the cathedral remains of colour have been discovered; a careful and accurate account of this has been prepared by the same skilled and painstaking observer, and leads us to the certain conclusion that from the end of the eleventh century to well-nigh the middle of the sixteenth, our fathers, who designed, built, altered as their various schools of architecture—Romanesque, Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular—came into fashion, very largely used colour and gold as a means of ornamentation *in every part of the building*. Very little indeed of a great Benedictine abbey seems to have been *uncoloured*.

. . . . .

Now our present taste—is it not want of taste? —may severely criticise this mediæval love of colour; but the *fact* is there, and in all studies and descriptions of these inimitable works of our “Fathers” the general use of colour deserves a far more careful and sympathetic consideration than this great feature in the mediæval abbeys and churches is in the habit of receiving. It is too often slurred over—forgotten, ignored. *After* some four hundred and fifty years, many of them years of utter carelessness, and even of neglect; *after* several raids of iconoclasts, of men often devoted, it is true, but who hated the soft but brilliant loveliness of these decorations of the mediæval artist as leading to superstitious reverence; *after* many coats of destructive and hateful whitewash plastered over pier and roof, over tomb and altar, over wall and window tracery—still the patient investigator finds well-nigh everywhere the dim lines of the old fair colour, and the tarnished, almost obliterated remains of gold. He finds it—this colouring—in every portion of the scarred and still lovely cathedral, some of it laid on by the workmen of Abbot Serlo, the Conqueror’s chaplain; some of it the handiwork of Abbot Thokey, the friend of the ill-fated Edward II., and of his successor, Wigmore, the founder of the Perpendicular School; some of it owing to the loving care of the last abbots who bore rule in this storied Benedictine House, shortly before the dissolution of the monastery, when Henry VIII. was king.

The colours lay once in the form of a barbaric adornment—as some would call it—on the huge cylindrical pillars of the Romanesque nave, and on the mighty and somewhat shapeless piers of the old Norman or Norman-Romanesque ambulatory which encircles the choir. They gleamed and shone on the early attempts at vaulting in the nave aisles. They were laid on, a picturesque confusion of beauty, over

the elaborate work in the Early English clerestory, and somewhat later over the vaulting of the nave. The gorgeous vaulting of the soaring choir was aflame with colour and gold, which has been somewhat timidly, but still effectively, restored in late years. The Lady Chapel, probably never finished, was once splendid with coloured devices, and if, as some suppose, the colouring ended where the great glass wall begins in that delicate and matchless Mary Chapel, the white walls of the upper portion of the Lady Chapel were left simply as a silver setting to the beautiful stained windows, now restored to something of their old beauty, the wall of stained glass being after all the great feature of this inimitable Lady Chapel. There was apparently scarcely any white glass, not even pearly grisaille, in this typical Benedictine abbey of the Severn lands; the windows being probably all richly stained and painted. *Once* it is certain our cathedral of Gloucester, nave and aisles, choir and transept, the broad ambulatory and the Lady Chapel, received their light through the medium of jewelled glass of the artists of the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries.

Now when was this strange white nave we are looking and wondering at built?

The unvarying tradition based on the "Historia" compiled by Walter Froucester, Abbot of Gloucester, in the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV., tells us it was the work of Serlo, the chaplain of William the Conqueror, between the years 1087 and 1100. It was not the first Gloucester Abbey. Far back, the same abbey records tell us that Osric, the kinsman of Ethelred, King of Mercia, built the first Abbey of Gloucester in the year of grace 681, in honour of God and S. Peter. All we know of this first church was that, beside the high altar, it contained an



important altar of S. Petronilla, the daughter of S. Peter, on the north side of the old church, before which the founder, Osric, and the first three royal abbesses<sup>1</sup> were buried.

Briefly to recapitulate the outlines of the abbey story: In A.D. 767, in a period of sore unrest and confusion, this house came to an end, and lay waste for about fifty years. Beornwulf, King of Mercia, rebuilt it and converted it into a foundation for secular canons. These canons existed until A.D. 1022, when King Canute introduced the Benedictine Order; after thirty-seven years a fire seems to have destroyed both church and monastery.

Aldred, Bishop of Worcester, rebuilt the church in part and the monastery in A.D. 1058, when Edward the Confessor was king. It seems probable that Aldred never completed the work. The building work, partly finished, was interrupted by the death of Edward the Confessor and the period of disastrous confusion throughout England which followed the Norman Conquest.

In A.D. 1087, the church was taken in hand again by the first Norman abbot, Serlo, and completed in A.D. 1100, when it was formally consecrated, only a few weeks before the death of William Rufus in the New Forest.

The theory then which the writer of this account puts forth is as follows: the eastern portion of the present cathedral, including the crypt, is mainly the work of Aldred in the days of Edward the Confessor; while the nave, much as we see it now, was the handiwork of Serlo, who completed the unfinished church of Aldred.

This is not the commonly received opinion, which now refers the eastern portion also to Serlo in the eleventh century, and the nave to the early years of the twelfth century, mostly under Serlo, who lived till A.D. 1108, or

<sup>1</sup> Like certain other pre-Norman religious houses, Gloucester was a double one for men and women under the rule of an abbess.



to his immediate successors. This theory assumes that Serlo completely destroyed Aldred's church of 1058.

The building problem that meets us is the *startling difference* between the eastern portion of the abbey, which, though partly hidden by the veil of Perpendicular masonry hung over it in the fourteenth century, is still with us, and the great western limb of the church represented by the wonderful Romanesque nave.

Nowhere is this startling difference better expressed than by the words of Professor Freeman, who thus writes:—

“The eastern limb (of the church) follows the usual proportions of an early Norman minster, with low arches and a triforium. The nave is utterly different. Vast round pillars of most unusual height, far higher than even those of Durham, support a small triforium and clerestory. The contrast is most marked. Either the nave was built very soon after the presbytery, by another architect whose ideas were wholly different from those of the architect of the presbytery, or else the single architect of the two sought to startle all beholders by making the greatest possible contrast between the two main parts of this building.”

Freeman absolutely rejects the idea of any important work having been done to the building *after* A.D. 1100, in the twelfth century, such as the rebuilding or recasting of the nave: he dwells on the fact that no hint is given in the *Historia* of any such work, such as the rebuilding of the nave, and the Chronicle in question, it must be remarked, is always most particular in giving such details, going very minutely into these things.

The advocates of the theory which ascribes a somewhat later date to the nave dwell on the fact that two desolating fires—in 1101 and 1122—are recorded by national as well as by local writers to have burned the city and the monastery, and it is distinctly said that the church was burned

in one of these. But, as Freeman very justly remarks, "every one who is used to the language of these times, knows with what wonderful laxity phrases like these are used. Doubtless, as he says, some damage to the church was done, but the church itself was *not* burned down; at least, if it was, it is passing strange that there is no notice of the rebuilding of any part of it in the *Historia*."

The great historian sums up that he believed it was the greater part of the church, *including the nave and choir*, and not a mere fragment, that was consecrated in A.D. 1100.

Thus while Freeman, from the silence of the "Records," conclusively maintains that the nave was certainly not built or even altered after A.D. 1100, he leaves virtually unsolved the problem of the striking difference, the marked contrast which exists between the Romanesque choir and the Romanesque nave.

The theory, above advanced, that the choir and the crypt were portions of the unfinished church of Aldred (A.D. 1057), completely disposes of the difficulty. It also does away with the highly improbable suggestion that the *whole* of the vast church was built and completed in thirteen years (A.D. 1087-1100).<sup>1</sup>

There is another suggestion in favour of the theory that the eastern portion of the church was Aldred's work, which should not be lost sight of. Passing round the ambulatory which encircles the choir, the appearance of those huge massive pillars over which the veil of Perpendicular tracery or stone lacework is, so to speak, hung, is very striking. They are evidently an older and much ruder

<sup>1</sup> This theory that the east end of the abbey was largely Aldred's work was advanced with great skill by Gambier Parry in his suggestive article on the "Cathedral Builders," *Records of Gloucester Cathedral*, Part I., and is supported by Canon Bazeley, who argues mainly from the masons' marks still visible in the nave, and on the newer work in the crypt, whereas in the older or original work in the crypt there are no masons' marks at all.

work than the great pillars or cylindrical piers of the nave; they are not all even rounded off; indeed the enormous pillars, if we choose to call them pillars, at the extreme east end of the ambulatory are almost shapeless. Surely all this belongs to an earlier school of Romanesque than the nave; and the theory which ascribes this portion of the church to Aldred, some forty years before Serlo built his nave, becomes at least a probable supposition.

During the twelfth century, the *Historia* chronicles no changes in or additions to the fabric whatever. The flat wooden ceiling, without doubt painted and gilded, still covered nave and choir and transepts very much as we now see at Peterborough and S. Albans.

But in the next century many important changes took place in our church. In A.D. 1232, the great central tower was built, or possibly only raised, by Helias the sacrist. In A.D. 1242, one of the great fires which seriously damaged the fabric, destroyed the flat wooden nave roof, which was replaced by the stone vault we now see. The work in question was carried out by the monks themselves. It is one of the regrettable features of our church.

Shortly before the new nave stone vault was put up, the first small but important Lady Chapel was built, *circa* A.D. 1224.

But the next century—the fourteenth—was really the second time of building in the great minster church.

In the nave a notable reconstruction took place in the year 1318. John Thokey, a name well known and honoured in the list of the rulers of Gloucester Abbey, was abbot; he found it necessary to rebuild or reconstruct the south aisle.

When the nave was first built in the later years of the eleventh century by Abbot Serlo, the two aisles, north



and south, were vaulted with stone. The architects of that age were beginning to feel their way to vaulting with stone. This, during the earlier middle ages, had been in the West a lost art. In the eleventh century, however, the lost art began to be recovered. At first, the architect, as a rule, only attempted to cover with stone vaulting comparatively small spaces, *e.g.*, in the crypt, in the apse, in the aisles. In a vast number of churches built in the eleventh century, this vaulting,<sup>1</sup> owing to its faulty construction, gave way, with the result that, comparatively speaking, but little of this early stone vaulting work now remains. In our cathedral, the nave vaulting was not attempted, but, as we have seen, was roofed with wood. In the crypt and aisles, stone vaulting was, however, attempted. In the north aisle, the stone vault "stood." It remains intact to this day, and is a fine example of Romanesque vaulting. In the south aisle, in the early years of the fourteenth century, the settlement of the original Norman work was so pronounced, that Abbot Thokey determined to strengthen it with exterior buttresses; but this not proving sufficient to stay the impending ruin, he was compelled to take down the Norman vaulting altogether, and to substitute for it vaulting of the

<sup>1</sup> There is no question but that after the Barbarian invasions of Italy and the West, the vaulting larger spaces with stone was a lost art. In Lombardy, where the famous Comacine school of builders lived on and worked during these troublous ages, laborious experiments were made again and again to recover this lost art. But down to Carolingian times in the ninth and tenth centuries this school, by far the most advanced school of builders in the West, confined the application of vaulting to the apse and the crypt of the churches they erected; when more daring work was attempted, ruin and disaster followed. The vaulted Lombard Basilica only really appeared, and then only in a few instances, quite at the end of the tenth and in the eleventh centuries. The roofs of the naves of the great Norman-Romanesque (Lombardic) abbeys or cathedrals of England which arose at the end of the eleventh and during the twelfth centuries were as a rule *not* vaulted with stone, but were flat and trabeated, *i.e.*, covered with timber.



same style as the buttresses he had already erected, preserving, however, the original Norman clustered piers, with the result that he has left us in the south aisle, interior and exterior, one of the richest examples of the Decorated style of the fourteenth century.

But the great architectural building work of this century, which affected the whole of England, will be dwelt upon when we come to describe the south transept and the choir.

Before writing of the great "screen" which, closing the west end of the choir, effectually shuts out the nave from the choir, a planning which was strictly in accordance with the mind of the original architects of the abbey, it may be well just to call attention to the massive Georgian flooring, and to certain other features in the nave.

This plain ugly stone floor, put down in A.D. 1740, covers a much older flooring of tiles, no doubt much broken up, where graves had been dug in the nave and aisles. It is a dream of the writer of this little handbook to remove this ugly stone floor, and to reveal and repair, where necessary, the old tiled floor below, and probably some interesting and historical grave-slabs. This would be a somewhat costly work, and one which would only possess an antiquarian and perhaps an historical interest—still it would add, besides, well-nigh a foot to the height of the great Norman pillars and impart a mass of dull red colour to the pale grey nave. But the Georgian stone floor is in perfect order, and deplorably neat, and the scheme or the dream would find little favour with the mere utilitarian restorer.

The uninteresting perpendicular pillars at the west end of the nave, supporting pointed Gothic arches, are the work of John Morwent, abbot A.D. 1420–1437, in the reigns of Henry V. and Henry VI. Something in the way of a catastrophe must have happened at the west end,

for one or both the towers which originally adorned the west end of the church were pulled down apparently in his time; the reason for this is uncertain; probably a grave settlement had taken place; some suggest an earthquake as the possible cause of the settlement; another tradition speaks of the mischief as the result of a fire. At all events, one, or perhaps both, of the original towers at the west end disappeared at this time—when the west front put on its present simple unadorned aspect. To Morwent is ascribed the design of carrying out a reconstruction of the entire nave, in order to bring the stately Norman nave into harmony with the new forms which in the preceding century had been given to the choir and transepts. Most happily this design, if it ever really existed, was not carried out, and the appearance of the noble and matchless Romanesque nave of Serlo is really but little injured by the somewhat tasteless western alterations.

The important south porch, a work of conspicuous taste and richness, is a happier specimen of Abbot Morwent's building industry. In this porch, the original Norman doors were preserved and with rare skill and industry fitted into the really beautiful fifteenth-century porch of Morwent. They are noble specimens of Norman iron and wood-work, and deserve careful study. These striking doors have, curiously enough, attracted but little attention, and are generally unnoticed.

The east end of the nave is taken up by the solid stone screen which closes the entrance to the choir. It is heavy, plain, and colourless, and consists of two massive walls supporting a broad floor upon which now stands the great organ—one of the treasures of the cathedral.

This screen is utterly devoid of any beauty or grace, and occupying, as it does, a prominent place in the cathedral arrangement, its severe ugliness is much to be deplored.

Yet no true critic would wish it removed; for to a certain extent it carries out the original plan devised by the great Benedictine architects for the interior arrangement of their mighty abbey. These true artists never dreamed of



SOUTH PORCH ERECTED BY ABBOT MORWENT—EARLY PART  
OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

making the abbey into one long church; with them the choir and presbytery were intended for the use of the dwellers in the religious house, and the nave was left as the church of the lay-folk—for the citizens; and also for the many travellers and pilgrims visiting and desirous of worshipping in the great church of the Severn lands.



The acoustic properties of the present building are, on the whole, admirable, both as regards music, and prayers and preaching. These acoustic properties, which now leave nothing to be desired, would be seriously interfered with were the great screen which separates the choir from the nave removed. By the present arrangement the preacher, either in the choir or the nave, given that the preacher possesses a fair voice and understands its management, is well heard; and for all music—vocal and instrumental—Gloucester Cathedral is simply perfect. Musicians are agreed in considering the present building as matchless, and in deprecating any change.

In an artistic point of view, the removal of the screen would be simply disastrous. The vista which would be opened out, which those, who criticise the present arrangement, so earnestly desire, would be positively painful. The striking difference in the architecture which exists between the eastern and western limbs of the cathedral would be utterly unsatisfactory to the eye. The splendid and matchless effect of the soaring choir would be sadly impaired if it were thrown open to the Romanesque nave, while the nave, much lower than the lofty choir, would be dwarfed in height.

But although any idea of doing away with the screen must be absolutely put aside, the screen itself might be enormously improved by skilful enrichment, presumably by colour and gold, judiciously laid on.

Let us for a moment or two endeavour to reconstruct, as well as we can, the *original* screenwork of the great Benedictine architects who designed the glorious abbey.

The present plain and massive screen, which with two thick walls supports the platform on which stands the great organ, exactly occupies the old place, and on its choir side is completely veiled, as in old days, with the beautiful and



original richly-carved stalls; on the choir side, nothing now is to be desired. It is on the nave side that it is ugly and unattractive. In pre-Reformation days this was faced with very rich tabernacle work and with statuary, all gleaming with colour and gold. There were two altars with their rich hangings on either side of the present door or entrance to the choir. It was all constructed, or at least reconstructed, by Albert Wigmore, before A.D. 1337, and was further adorned by Abbot Horton, A.D. 1351-1377.

The broad platform, loft, or gallery which extends still over the two massive walls above referred to was known in mediæval days as the "Pulpitum;" it must not be confounded with the modern "Pulpit" from which sermons and addresses are delivered, although the word "Pulpit" is, of course, derived from it. "Pulpitum" signified originally a staging made of boards, a scaffold, or platform for lectures, etc., especially a stage for actors. The word is used in this latter sense by Suetonius, Pliny, Horace, and Juvenal. On this "Pulpitum" or platform stood, apparently, an altar and the pair of small organs which before Reformation times were in common use. From this "Pulpitum" or platform, on the principal feasts, the epistle for the day was read, and the gospel solemnly sung at a great eagle-desk.

Save in the question of decoration, carving, painting, and gilded work, and the presence of the altars below and above, there is little change in the present arrangement. In continuation of the west wall supporting the "Pulpitum" were stone screens in both aisles which stretched across the whole church.

But the great change in the arrangement of the nave consisted in a second screen, which stood between the second pair of the pillars or piers in the nave. All traces

of this screen have long disappeared. This second screen was a lofty stone wall against which stood the principal altar of the nave—the lay-folk's altar, generally called the altar of St. Cross, or the Holy Rood altar—sometimes known as the "Jesus" altar, which was protected by a wooden screen. On this lofty stone wall was a narrow gallery called the Rood loft, from its containing the great Rood with the attendant images—in Gloucester Abbey the great Rood or Crucifix, with its attendant figures of the Virgin and S. John, possibly stood on a Rood beam which crossed the church at some height directly above the Rood loft. The place where this Rood beam was fixed is still apparently marked here by new stones inserted in both pillars exactly on the line where the ends of the Rood beam would be rested on corbels in the pillars.

Reckoning the two massive walls supporting the broad platform, originally called the "Pulpitum," on which the organ now stands, as the first screen, it was this *second* screen with the Rood altar in front of it, and the mighty Rood or Crucifix and the attendant figures towering over it, which in pre-Reformation days closed the vista of the nave.

The screen above the Rood altar, and on either side of it, was, no doubt, highly decorated; but as the whole of the arrangement has completely disappeared, any attempt to describe it would be pure guesswork.

All that can be said is, that the east end of the nave must have presented a most imposing and highly ornate appearance—very different to the cold and severely plain organ screen which now closes the nave on the east.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOUTH TRANSEPT

THE screen work on the south side, which formed a continuation of the west wall of the "Pulpitum" (the present organ platform), has all vanished, and a plain iron railing, with a little gate, closes the approach to the eastern end of the church. Passing through the little gate into the space between the last two piers, which is virtually part of the south aisle of the nave, there are two somewhat remarkable ancient monuments on either side. That on the left is the chapel tomb of Abbot Seabroke (A.D. 1457), the builder of the present Perpendicular tower. He wears the alb, stole, tunic, dalmatic, chasuble, amice, and mitre; a pastoral staff is by his side. The effigy, which is fairly well preserved, is of alabaster.

On the wall on the right side there is a recessed tomb of a knight and his lady, *circa* A.D. 1410. The knight wears a mixed armour of mail and plate; the lady is habited in a kirtle mantle, and she has flowing hair.

The chief interest in this monument is that both the knight and lady have the S.S. collar. This is a very early "mention" of this interesting decoration, which is usually assumed to be a Lancastrian ornament. Great doubt hangs over the meaning of the letters S.S.

The best interpretation of this singular ornament is the following. In the Parliamentary Rolls (Rot. Parl. III. 313) we read "how Richard II., after the coming of his uncle Henry of Lancaster into England, took the collar

of S.S. from his uncle's neck and put it on his own, vowing to wear it, and use it, in sign of good love of his whole heart between them."

If the letters S.S. signify *Souvenir vous demoy*, as has been conjectured, the collar would then be a sign of perpetual friendship and affection.

The knight has been supposed to be the effigy of Humphry de Bohun, Earl of Hereford, and the lady, his countess. More probably the effigy represents Sir John Brydges, who fought at Agincourt. But the identification is uncertain.

The collar of S.S. is still worn by certain high officials, notably by the Lord Chief Justice of England. It is mentioned in an inventory of jewels belonging to Edward III. and Richard II., and was worn in the reigns of Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI., by knights and ladies. Edward IV. discontinued it and replaced it by the collar of Suns and Roses. It was, however, revived by Henry VII. and became again a favourite decoration. But the meaning of the S.S. is, after all, purely conjectural.

The south aisle here abruptly closes, and the south transept opens out. The eastern limb of the cathedral may be said to begin here, and a complete change in the architecture of the great pile is noteworthy—a change at least in the ornamentation of the building, as well as in some important new constructional features, which, with the exception of the present Lady Chapel, were due to the great building impulse which arose in Gloucester in the fourteenth century. The present Lady Chapel was a later piece of work.

We pass at once here from the stern grave Romanesque to Gothic Perpendicular. Architecturally, this south transept is the most interesting spot in the cathedral. It is now justly looked upon as the birthplace of Perpen-



dicular architecture—that peculiar English form of Gothic which some time after the middle of the fourteenth century was generally adopted in England. In the fourteenth, and all through the fifteenth, and part of the sixteenth centuries, roughly speaking, a period of some two hundred and ten years, it replaced Romanesque and the earlier developments of Gothic, popularly known as the Early English and Decorated forms.

It is a strange story, and the enormous influence which the genius of Abbots Wigmore, Stanton, and Horton, who followed Abbot Thokey, exercised upon the architecture of the whole of England, determines us to dwell upon it briefly.

John Thokey, abbot A.D. 1307–1329, when the hapless King Edward II. was foully murdered in Berkeley Castle A.D. 1326, was courageous enough to give to the body of the deposed king, of whom he had been the friend for many years, honourable burial in his abbey church, at a moment when any act of loyalty to Edward II.'s memory was a dangerous act of friendship. The brave act of Thokey quickly met with its reward, for very shortly after the murder of the hapless king, Edward III., son and successor of Edward II., came to the throne, and treated the abbey, which had given his father the hospitality of the tomb, with special favour.

The tomb of the murdered Edward II. at once became a general object of pilgrimage from all England. The revolution of feeling towards Edward II. was extraordinary, and every rank and order from King Edward III. and his queen, Philippa, downwards, became eager to visit the dead king's tomb and to pray there. It was a strange object of cult—this dead Edward II., who in life seems little indeed to have merited any such recognition—but the fact is there;

it is undisputed, and the offerings at the shrine of the murdered sovereign rapidly filled the coffers of the abbey. All England felt that her anointed king had been allowed to be done to death, and that something in the nature of a curse lay on home and hearth, wife and child!

Thokey resigned his high office shortly after A.D. 1326-1327, and was succeeded by Abbot Wigmore.

Wigmore was evidently a great builder, and he and his advisers were evidently architects of rare ability, and with the help of the enormous offerings at the tomb, he began a work which completely recast part of the church in a new architectural style of which he may be fairly called the inventor.

Now what made Wigmore, the abbot, do this great thing which had such far-reaching consequences? I think we can read what was in the mind of this great building abbot, who when he set about his beautiful work had, of course, no prophetic instinct that he was about to invent a perfectly new style of architecture—no prophetic instinct that he was to be the founder, for that is what Wigmore was, of a school of artists who were to give the key-note to English architecture for some two hundred eventful years.

Freeman does not hesitate to rank Wigmore in the same category with the great English architects and builders, such as the Confessor at Westminster, William of Saint Calais (Carilef) at Durham, and Hugh of Avalon in the choir of Lincoln. But though it is a startling thing to affirm, the influence of Wigmore of Gloucester's work in the south transept of our cathedral was more far-reaching than the work of any of those great builders.

What now, we ask again, was in his mind when he set himself to transform the Romanesque south transept of his great abbey?

Of course, he never dreamed of its influence in the dim

future ages, but we may be quite sure that Wigmore's plans and general policy accurately reflected the spirit of his age and time.

(1) For more than one hundred and fifty years, a feeling of discontent with the severe and even austere Romanesque school had been growing in all the countries north of the Alps, including, of course, England, a desire for a more graceful and ornamental style of building had been everywhere manifest. The wars of the Crusaders had in truth revealed a new world of art to the Western peoples.

This universal longing in no small degree was, of course, shared by a great building abbot like Wigmore.

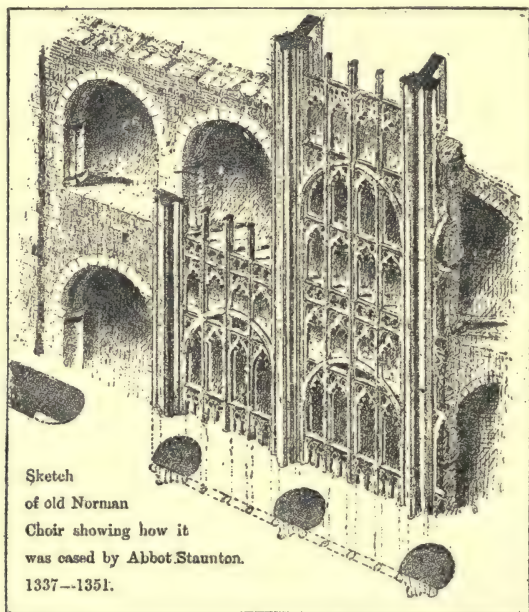
(2) There was a general craving after *more light* than the small narrow Romanesque windows provided for the interior of the church. At any rate, surely the eastern and more important limb of the great abbey ought, if possible, to be furnished with vastly enlarged window apertures. This was now possible, for glass, which in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was very costly, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries became much cheaper and easier to be obtained; added to which the craft of glass-painting had in the thirteenth century made vast strides, and the glory of stained and painted glass as a magnificent adornment of the interior of a church was beginning to be universally recognised. The guilds of coloured and painted glass painters were thoroughly dissatisfied with the small and narrow Romanesque windows, and clamoured for a more extended field for the exercise and display of their beautiful art.

Again, the charming work carried out by Wigmore's predecessor, Abbot Thokey, in the south aisle, with its decorated vault and exquisite windows, no doubt suggested a recasting in the more sacred eastern limb of the abbey.

(3) And, lastly, the rich offerings of the crowds of

pilgrims to the tomb of the murdered king provided ample funds for a great recasting of the dark and somewhat gloomy transepts and choir.

All these considerations, no doubt, inspired the great and ambitious building abbot to begin at once his work of



changing the east end of his abbey. Soon after his election as abbot, Wigmore began to alter the aspect of the south transept.

The most conspicuous outward and visible sign of this recasting work, without doubt, was the huge new window which now fills up so large a portion of the south wall of the



transept. But Wigmore was not content with his new great window—other windows must be inserted; all the walls and the roof must be richly decorated; a vault of stone with much ornamentation in the form of lierne ribs must replace the old flat wooden roof.

Now, however, comes in the great problem which meets us in Wigmore's wonderful pioneer work in Perpendicular architecture. As well as a great window, he would have elaborately adorned walls. Here, quite different to the recasting of the south aisle by his predecessor, Thokey, who had to rebuild as well as to decorate, for a grave settlement of roof and walls had taken place and absolute ruin was imminent—Wigmore found the masonry of the eastern limb of the abbey absolutely perfect; all that he had to do, with the exception of taking out the south wall for the putting in of the great window which filled up the old Norman wall, and the insertion of other windows, notably the one in the west wall, was simply to decorate. This he did by means of *panel* work most skilfully laid over the old plain Norman walls. The old walls were carefully chipped and pared down, then a layer of plaster was introduced, and new stone panels were bonded in with rare skill.

Now the question comes in, why were straight lines preferred in this panelling and tracery work to the more elegant and perhaps more beautiful flowing lines so marked a feature in the decorated styles of the earlier Gothic? The answer is, that it is most probable that for the purpose of spreading something over something else, *the straight line* was most convenient; this is best seen in the veil of Perpendicular tracery spread over or "hung over" the Norman work in the choir. When the fashion was once set at Gloucester, there grew a genuine love for these straight lines, and then when Perpendicular architecture became the vogue, these straight lines were adopted universally in

other places where the original necessity for these straight lines—which existed in Gloucester—did not call for them.<sup>1</sup>

The south transept, much as we now see it, with the exception of the ancient colouring, which has almost entirely disappeared, was completed by Wigmore in six years, A.D. 1329–1335.<sup>2</sup>

Leading out of this historical south transept are three chapels, each of which is of more than ordinary interest. The first, on the left-hand side of the entrance to the south transept, is the tomb, and contains the well-preserved alabaster effigy of Abbot Seabroke, the builder of the famous central tower. It has been already briefly described. It can only be entered through the sub-sacrist's little chamber beneath the pulpitum (or organ platform).

The second chapel is of considerable size—its history and original dedication is unknown. Besides some sepulchral slabs, it contains the remains of two reredoses, one veiling the other. The original Norman work has disappeared; it was probably re-arranged by Wigmore when he recast the south transept. The present wooden screen and the monograms S and B on the panelling at the back of the stalls of the choir are the work of John Browne or Newton, the abbot who immediately preceded Malvern or Parker, who in 1539–40, when the abbey was suppressed by Henry VIII., closed the long series of the Abbots of Gloucester. Abbot John Browne is said to have re-dedicated the chapel to S. John the Baptist—the monograms S and B surmounted by crowns are a rebus, the initials of the founder or decorator of the chapel and of the great saint to whom the chapel was re-dedicated being the same.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Freeman, *Records of Gloucester Cathedral*, Part II., pp. 145–6.

<sup>2</sup> The present stone vault of this south transept was also the work of Abbot Wigmore. It replaced, no doubt, the original wooden or trabeated ceiling of the transept, and is an admirable piece of vaulting.

The third chapel on the north side, generally termed S. Andrew's Chapel, was traditionally the Chapel of S. Petronilla, the virgin daughter of S. Peter, whose strange connection with this ancient church goes back to the early years of the eighth century.

The remarkable thrust or buttress which crosses the front of this chapel was one of the buttresses arranged by Wigmore to support the great central tower which, it is believed, that great building abbot hoped one day would replace the much smaller but important Romanesque tower, rebuilt or added to by Tully in A.D. 1222.

The buttress of Wigmore, however, apparently only supplanted or strengthened a yet older Norman buttress or thrust, remains of which can still be traced, originally planned as one of the supports of the original Norman (Romanesque) central tower. The tower will be described in detail later.

This chapel has been beautifully decorated by the late T. Gambier Parry.

The entire front of this chapel, including the great buttress, was for many years entirely veiled by a wall of Siena marble, upon which was once fixed the huge monument of Bishop Benson, now fastened on the south triforium wall near the eastern end. Huge though this monument be, few even are aware of its existence, hidden away, as it is, in the corner of the south-east end of the triforium.

The entrance to the crypt, one of the striking features of the cathedral, is through a narrow door on the north side of this south transept. The crypt will be described later at length.

Before describing the choir in detail, we will very briefly sketch in the procedure which completed the recasting of the whole of the eastern part of the great church.

The pioneer work of Wigmore in the south aisle was completed in A.D. 1335, Edward III. being king. But the wonderful source of income which enabled him to undertake and carry out his new strange work did not dry up, but rather increased in volume.

The offerings at the tomb of the murdered king went on; the history compiled by Abbot Froucester even tells us that the offerings were sufficient, had they been all so used, to renew the whole church. But the east end was all that the monk architects took in hand.

Wigmore was succeeded in A.D. 1337 by Adam de Stanton, abbot from A.D. 1337-1351. Much of the new work in the church was finished in his time, and was virtually completed under his successor, Thomas Horton, abbot from 1351-1377.

Roughly speaking, the work consisted in:—

(1) Giving to the choir a new measure of *height*, which was unusual in English abbeys. The choir of Gloucester, as recast by Stanton, soars not merely over the nave, but over every existing church in England, save only Westminster and York.

(2) *Light*. The whole of the choir was not only raised in height, but much of the entire wall on both sides, where the wall rose above the old Norman work, became one vast window. The lofty clerestory, which now towered above the original Norman walls, was, in fact, a sheet of glass beautifully but lightly painted; the great windows on both sides of the church being virtually only separated one from the other by slender buttressed divisions, reaching from their bases on the Norman triforium to the vaulting.

The changed choir was now roofed by a beautiful stone vault, elaborately moulded and gleaming with gold and colour, and closed at the east end by the great window of Abbot Stanton, which really is a wall of glass.







*Photo.*

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*

THE CHOIR OF THE CATHEDRAL, LOOKING EAST  
Showing the Great East Window

The wonder is that, although the new, comparatively thin work which was carried far above the old strong thick Norman walls now supports stone groining and a heavy oak roof above, covered with lead, that the signs of settlement and fracture which now exist are not even more serious than they are after a lapse of five and a half centuries.

It was a most hazardous piece of construction. The walls above the Norman work, as we said, are pierced with huge windows filled with stained glass, and the richly adorned vaulted roof above is well said "to float on the illumined air," the only apparent support being the strong thrust of the half-barrel vault low down, which we see in the triforium ambulatory, and the series of rather small insignificant-looking but solid buttresses on the outside, buttresses built apparently on the roof of the triforium, but in reality resting on the mighty shapeless piers or columns of the ambulatory below, which encircles the choir.

A modern architect would not risk such a towering superstructure upon such supports and with such abutments, but the fact that the choir of Gloucester with its stone vault and lead-covered roof, although showing serious indications of movement,<sup>1</sup> still stands after nigh six centuries, would seem in a measure to justify the daring methods of construction adopted by these great mediæval architects.

<sup>1</sup> The defective work here is now being most carefully attended to and, when needful, repaired.

## CHAPTER V

### THE CHOIR DESCRIBED IN DETAIL

THE choir is usually entered from one of the ambulatory doors, most conveniently, perhaps, from the south, at the top of the steps leading out of this south transept—the historical birthplace of Perpendicular architecture.

But the best view of this, perhaps the most beautiful and striking portion of the cathedral, is obtained from the main western entrance underneath the “pulpitum,” the broad deep platform on which stands the present great organ.

At once it will be seen that a grave error would be committed should the broad deep screen and platform on which the organ stands ever be taken away.

The visitor at once feels as he passes through the passage beneath the organ screen that a *new world of thought* is entered: the Norman-Romanesque conception, which, changeless in the midst of change, still reigns in the austere and solemn nave and ambulatories, is replaced by a creation of some two hundred and fifty years later.

That nave is now completely hidden, and a strange and lovely church of great size and towering height lies in front of the visitor. This is the choir as recast by the master builders of the fourteenth century. It is very long—not too long, however, for its great height; the fretted roof, a delicate mosaic of tender colours set in pale gold, soars high above the vaulting of the nave. The proportions are simply perfect. From the lofty traceried roof down to







*Photo,*

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*

THE TOMB OF KING EDWARD II.

The work of King Edward III.

the tiled floor, the walls beyond the long row of stalls are covered with richly-carved stone panelled work, broken here and there with delicate screens of stone. This eastern end of the cathedral is the home of several historic shrines, of which more anon. The lack of the ancient colouring is less felt here than in the pale grey Romanesque nave of which we have been speaking, for the western end of this great choir is furnished with some sixty elaborately carved and canopied stalls of dark oak, mostly the work of the fourteenth century. The elaborately fretted work of the ceiling we have already spoken of as a rich mosaic of gold and colours. It is one of the most magnificent in England. The floor, too, is bright and glittering—too glittering, if one may dare criticise anything in this charmed building. The reredos, too, behind the altar is also open to criticism. It is, like the floor, of modern work, but it gleams with gold, and on the whole it is a beautiful conception.

The whole of this, no doubt the loveliest choir in England, is brilliantly lit at the eastern end by a mighty wall of jewelled glass—and on the north and south sides by the row of great windows, the clerestory windows, each side literally an almost unbroken sheet of glass.

The great east window which floods the choir with its soft silvery light, faintly coloured with jewelled shafts of the richest blue and red, with here and there a vein of pale yellow, is the largest window in the world. We shall return to it again, for it is one of the glories of the cathedral. It dates from the middle of the fourteenth century, and, strangely enough, it has fairly escaped the rough handling of the Puritan soldiers of Cromwell and the destructive zeal of the modern restorer—and we look on it still very much as it left the workshop of Abbot Stanton—*circa* A.D. 1350.

. . . . .

## THE CHOIR—ITS ARRANGEMENT

The choir of Gloucester, of vast dimensions, is an admirable example of a completely enclosed choir of a great mediæval abbey church. The choir enclosure of Gloucester comprehended: (1) *The Sanctuary*, in which stood, as now, the high altar, placed in the apse with its raised platform and flight of steps. (2) The space termed *the Presbytery*, with a flight of three steps leading to it. Of these two spaces, the altar platform and the presbytery, both elevated, are raised over the crypt beneath. (3) Below the presbytery, at the bottom of the three steps above mentioned, comes *the Ritual Choir*, the choir proper, with its sixty stalls, twenty-five on either side, and ten at the western end, five on either side of the passage beneath the screen which separates the choir from the nave. These ten are termed return stalls.

The choir above described, including the high altar platform, the presbytery platform, the ritual choir, and the organ loft or gallery over the screen dividing the choir from the nave, is thrust forward through the transepts into the nave, in which it occupies a considerable space, the entire length of this vast choir being nearly equal to the length of the nave itself.

The wall or screen-work of this great choir enclosure is composed on the *western* end of the stone screen with the ten return stalls looking up the choir—on the *north* side of twenty-five stalls with their canopies; these stalls being partly backed up with the stone-work of the lower part of the great shafts supporting the tower. Further to the eastward, on the north side, the enclosure is composed mainly of three monumental tombs—two of these tombs contain the remains of kings, namely, of Edward II. and the Mercian Osric, and the third of them, the remains of



the last abbot of the old Benedictine house—Malvern or Parker.

The enclosure or screen above these great monuments is carried up to the roof—thus completely separating the choir from the ambulatory, which encircles the east end; the lower part of the enclosure consisting of the old Norman wall of the choir—the upper part resting on this Norman wall—was constructed by Abbot Stanton when he recast this eastern limb of the abbey. This upper part is pierced by a line of huge windows, which have been already described.

On the south side, the enclosure is somewhat similar; it is made up of twenty-five stalls backed in a similar way to those on the north by the stone-work of the great shafts which bear up the tower; and farther to the eastward, by a group of solid stone sedilia with canopies and by a wall resting on the old Norman work—elaborately panelled as on the north side, and similarly pierced with a row of great windows.

All this choir enclosure remains practically undisturbed since the days of Abbot Stanton, who remodelled the whole of the east end of the abbey.

#### THE CHOIR—ITS FIVE SEPULCHRAL HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

Three of these monuments form the lower story of the enclosure of the presbytery and sanctuary on the north side. The central monument on the north side is by far the most interesting from both an historic and architectural point of view. It is the tomb of King Edward II., and was erected by his son, Edward III., soon after the interment of the murdered king in the abbey.

In spite of what it has suffered at the hands of well-meaning restorers in 1737-1789, and 1798, the canopy and the monument still preserves much of its ancient loveliness—indeed, it is reputed to be one of the most beautiful sepulchral monuments in England—but its chief interest centres in the recumbent alabaster figure of Edward II. beneath the canopy. It has been but little defaced; it represents the king attired in a long tunic with a mantle and crown, and holding a sceptre (mutilated) and orb. The jewels in the crown have long since disappeared. The face is still fairly perfect, and it is believed to have been modelled on a cast of the monarch's face taken after death. Some think an expression of pain and suffering is still discernible on the beautiful features of the murdered Plantagenet sovereign.

The face—we entertain no doubt it is a portrait of the unhappy king—is strangely winning and attractive, though perhaps somewhat weak in character, but singularly peaceful and beautiful in its setting of long wavy hair; it is a face of one whom men and women would admire and even love; and seeing that to that rare beauty was added kingly rank, it was the face of one men would willingly die for, and no doubt many did, in those stormy turbulent days when that sad king reigned in England.

Beneath that stately tomb, with its fair crowned alabaster effigy, rests the unhappy man known in history as Edward II.

He was no stranger in the great Gloucester Abbey; years before the awful tragedy which closed his life, Edward on a visit to Gloucester was entertained by Abbot Thokey, and as he sat at table in the abbot's dining hall, after looking at the portraits of the sovereigns, his ancestors, depicted on the walls of the room, turned to his host, the abbot, and asked him, half in jest, half in earnest,



*Photo.*

HEAD OF KING EDWARD II.

From the alabaster Effigy on his Tomb, probably from a cast taken after death

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*





if the monks of Gloucester would ever give him a place on their walls among his royal ancestors.

The abbot replied—were his words a prophecy?—that he hoped to have his effigy too in the historic abbey, but in a far nobler place than in a mere guest-chamber.

The abbot's answer, or prophecy, was strangely fulfilled. For centuries, Edward's sculptured effigy, wearing royal robes and a kingly crown, has rested hard by the high altar of the abbey—surely this is a nobler resting-place than the dining hall of the abbot! <sup>1</sup>

In the year 1855, some doubts having been expressed as to whether the body <sup>2</sup> of the king really lay beneath the tomb, it was decided that an examination should be made, and this was done in the presence of Dr. Jeune, the residentiary canon, subsequently Bishop of Peterborough.

The following important memorandum was made by Mr. Marshall Allen, the sub-sacrist of the cathedral, who was present at the examination in question:—

“ On the second day of October, 1855, in the presence of Dr. Jeune, the canon in residence, Mr. Waller, the cathedral architect, Allen, the sub-sacrist, and Henry Clifford the (master) mason, the tomb of Edward II. in the cathedral was opened, by removing the floor on the south side of the tomb, and excavating about two feet, then working under the tomb; only just below the flooring, imme-

<sup>1</sup> The story as belonging to the history of the abbey is related vividly in the Memoir of Abbot Froucester. The original MS. is one of the treasures of the cathedral library.

<sup>2</sup> It is a favourite procedure on the part of certain captious critics to throw doubt upon the fact of a tomb really containing the remains of an illustrious dead. In the account of the tomb of Osric, a similar action was taken, and for many years the tomb of Osric, the original founder of the abbey, was believed in consequence to be a mere cenotaph, thus removing all the deep historic interest in the last home of the Great Dead; and when means are taken to disprove such assertions, another school of critics flippantly brand these necessary investigations, although carried out with all possible reverence and care, as desecration.

diately under the tomb, we came first to a wood coffin, quite sound, and after removing a portion of this, we came to a leaden one, containing the remains of the king; the wood, although light as cork, was still very perfect, and the lead one quite entire, and made with a very thick sheet of lead, its shape very peculiar, being square at bottom, and rising on each side like an arch, and so turned over the body in an oval or arched form, and made to set nearly down upon the body. The tomb was never known to have been opened before this. It remained open but the space of two hours, and was then closed again, without the slightest injury being done to the tomb. The fact of his interment being now five hundred and twenty-eight years since, it was considered to be in a wonderful state of preservation.

“(Signed) MARSHALL ALLEN,

“Oct. 3, 1857,

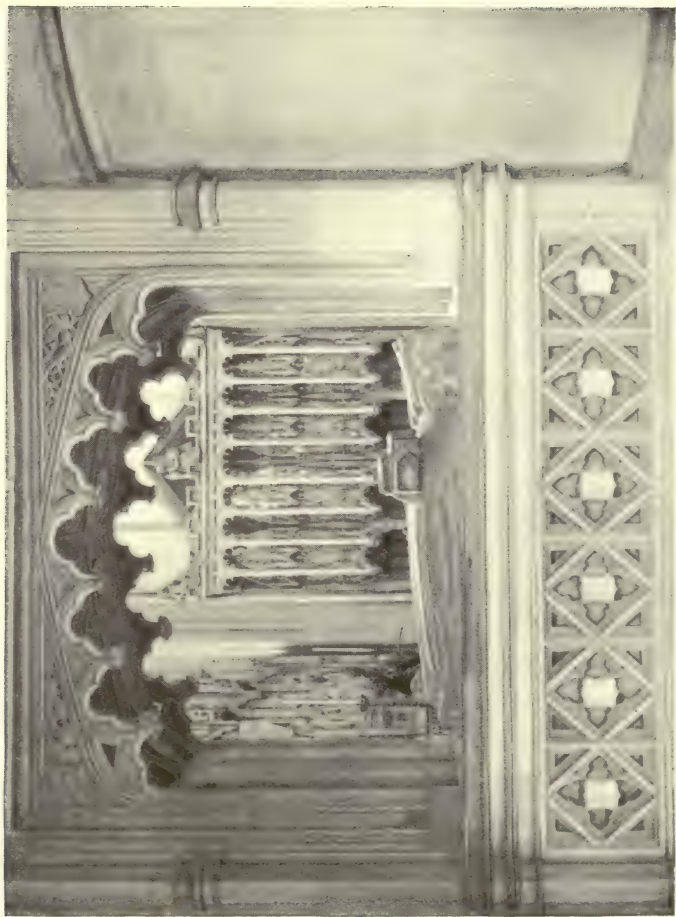
“*Sub-Sacrist.*

“CATHEDRAL, GLOUCESTER.”

The architect, Mr. Waller, senr., the only survivor of the little group who officially were present at the opening, told the present dean (Dr. Spence-Jones) that one curious detail was omitted in the above little *procès-verbal*. Adhering to the lead covering over the body of the king were many pieces of tarnished tinsel—red, blue, gold—evidently the remains of the hurried lying-in-state of the dead monarch after the body had been brought from Berkeley to Gloucester by Abbot Thokey.

Adjoining the sepulchral monument of Edward II., and close to the high altar, is a large canopied tomb, known as Osric's.

Osric seems ever to have been honoured as the founder of the abbey. The history of the abbey and monastery, compiled from ancient records by Abbot Froucester, tells us how Osric, King of Northumbria, who died the 9th of May, A.D. 729, was buried near his sister, Kyneburg, before the altar of S. Petronilla in the north part of the church. When Osric acted as viceroy of Ethelred, King



*Photo.*

**TOMB OF KING OSRIC, DIED A.D. 727**

*Fred H. Evans*

The Effigy is of the date of Edward III., the canopy work early in sixteenth century. The model of the Abbey rests on his breast, as the Founder of the Church. An ancient Leaden Coffin immediately beneath the Effigy contains the remains of Osric.





of Mercia, he founded the monastery and church of Gloucester, over which he appointed his sister, Kyneburg, as first abbess. The Gloucester foundation consisted of monks and nuns under the rule of an abbess—an arrangement, as we have stated, not unfrequent in the earlier middle ages in England and on the Continent of Europe.

During the changing fortunes of the religious house, the remains of its founder, Osric, appear to have been watched over with anxious care. The present tomb occupies the place of honour, on the north side of the high altar, the place usually reserved for the founder.

The sepulchral monument is a beautiful canopied tomb, the work of Malvern, the last Abbot of Gloucester, who has stamped it with his arms. The effigy of Osric, a rough work of no special merit, is evidently of an older date than Malvern. On the breast of the effigy rests a model of the abbey—the tower represents the low Norman massive tower which preceded the present magnificent tower of the fifteenth century.

For a long period it was generally supposed to be merely a memorial tomb—a cenotaph, or empty tomb. So Britton in his great work on the cathedrals of England speaks of the tomb as a “cenotaph.” This description was universally adopted.

The present dean (Dr. Spence-Jones) for some time adopted the universal tradition, till his attention was directed by one of his fellow workers in the cathedral (Canon Bazeley) to the statement of Leland, librarian of Henry VIII. The words of Leland occur in the notes made in the course of his official visit to the abbey of Gloucester shortly after its dissolution in A.D. 1540.

Leland's words were as follow:—

“Osric, founder of Gloucester Abbey, first laye in St. Petronell's Chapell, thence removed into our Lady Chapell, and thence removed

of late dayes, and layd under a fayre Tomb of stone on the north syde of the high Aulter. At the foote of the Tomb is this written on a Norman pillar, *Osricus Rex primus fundator hujus Monasterii*, 681."

Leland had, no doubt, derived his information from one of the monks of the fallen house, who had probably been an eye-witness of the last translation of the founder's remains from the Lady Chapel.

The dean determined to verify the words of Leland, which, if accurate, would disprove the usual tradition that the monument in question was a mere cenotaph.

On the night of the 7th January 1892, the dean, accompanied by Canon St. John the sub-dean, Canon Bazeley, the librarian, Mr. Waller, the architect of the cathedral, the sub-sacrist, and two skilled masons, caused two panels on the south side of the large stone loculus, or stone chest, on which the effigy of Osric rested, to be removed, and at once a long leaden coffin was disclosed, lying exactly beneath the king's effigy. The upper end of the leaden coffin had fallen in, apparently crushed by the weight of the stone effigy of Osric—thus exposing to view the contents of the lead coffin.

"It was a weird and striking scene," so runs the account of the work, "that night, as we stood and silently gazed on the coffin, whose existence no man living had ever suspected—the coffin which held the dust of the once famous Northumbrian king, who had in his stormy life done much for his Master's religion, and who had, some twelve centuries back, founded the stately abbey.

"The contents of the coffin disclosed the remains of a very ancient interment; much of the cement which had once fastened down the heavy stone effigy of Osric, had

fallen into the top or broken end of the lead coffin; a few small bones or pieces of bones could be seen mingled with the cement; the lower end of the coffin was perfect, and a grey dust marked the position where the legs and feet of the ancient king had rested. It seemed too hazardous to try and clear away the cement from the upper end of the coffin; it would have disturbed and partly destroyed the mouldering bones.

"No attempt was made to discover royal insignia or fragments of vesture. The remains were left untouched. The searchers in their reverent careful quest, simply desired to test the truth of Leland's assertion that the remains of the body of the great founder of the abbey were there."

Thus in the search, beyond all doubt, the statement of Leland, in A.D. 1540-1541, concerning the translation of the body of the royal founder of the abbey and religious house of Gloucester, was verified. Thanks to the work of that night, the stranger as he passes through the storied church will be told that that fair tomb which occupies the place of honour in the cathedral is no mere cenotaph, no mere monument raised in pious memory of the founder of the abbey, but is verily the resting-place of the remains of the ancient Northumbrian king, to whom as the restorer of their lost Christianity, Gloucester and the Severn lands owe so deep a debt of gratitude.

The lead coffin in which the remains of Osric now rest probably replaces a more ancient stone coffin. The translation from the stone to the lead coffin might have taken place when the remains of Osric were transferred from S. Petronilla's Chapel to the first Lady Chapel, or later in the first years of the sixteenth century, when, as Leland tells us, the remains of the founder of the abbey were taken

from the Lady Chapel and deposited in their present place of honour "in later dayes," no doubt by Abbot Malvern, A.D. 1514-1539, the builder of the present tomb, whose arms are carved on the spandrels of the canopy.

Adjoining the tomb of Edward II., on the west, is the beautiful Chauntry Chapel and tomb of William Malvern or Parker, the last abbot (A.D. 1514-1539). On the loculus or chest designed for the coffin rests an alabaster effigy of Malvern. This chauntry tomb was erected in the lifetime of Malvern. The loculus is decorated with emblems of the Passion. On the cornice of the tomb there are several examples of the pomegranate, the badge of Grenada, which was used by Katharine of Aragon, the ill-fated first wife of Henry VIII. One of these is especially interesting, as it is a curious rebus. The pomegranate, its stalk and leaves form the initial letter of Katharine. This silent testimony shows that Malvern was in sympathy with the unhappy queen. When the abbey was dissolved in 1539-1540, the deed of surrender was not signed by Malvern, but by the prior of the great house. Only a few months after the surrender the abbot died. A general tradition is current that the tomb is a cenotaph. This is possible, as the decease of the abbot took place after the abbey had passed into King Henry's hands. No examination, however, has taken place to verify the tradition in question.

Opposite this great monument, on the other side, is a singular bracket tomb, evidently the work of the builders of the fourteenth century, but the bracket supports an effigy of a much older date, of an abbot without mitre, but with a pastoral staff, holding a church—the symbol of a church founder. Various theories have been advanced as to the prelate here sculptured. Aldred has been suggested, and also Henry Foliot, abbot A.D. 1243. But



Leland expressly tells us the effigy is of Serlo, the first Norman abbot, who certainly built the nave of the abbey. Leland's testimony no doubt faithfully represents the abbey tradition of his day, which was, no doubt, accurate.

In the centre of the sanctuary is a monument of far greater historical interest. Sir William Guise, a learned and accurate scholar, in a paper contributed to the *Cathedral Records* (Part I.), thus writes of it: "Resting on a mortuary chest is the figure of Duke Robert of Normandy (the eldest son of the Conqueror), carved in oak and painted to represent life; he appears as cross-legged, armed in chain mail with short 'chausses de maille' on his legs. Over his armour he wears a red robe or surcote, over which is buckled his sword-belt with sword attached, the hilt of which he grasps with his right hand; on his head he wears a ducal coronet above a frank, open, and handsome countenance." At the period of the civil wars between the king and the parliament, this figure was broken into several pieces, and was only saved from destruction by the intervention of Sir Humphrey Tracy of Stanway. After the troubles were over the figure was put together and restored to the cathedral. The spurs<sup>1</sup> were added at this time. The exact date of the figure is unknown, but Sir William Guise considers it was executed at a time not very remote from that in which the unfortunate prince lived. It rests upon a mortuary chest, the chest in question being probably not later than the fifteenth century; but the figure is evidently of a very much older date. The coronet was one only borne by sovereign princes, and was rightly worn by Robert as Duke of Normandy.

<sup>1</sup> These spurs belong to the period of the civil wars. One of them has been recently restored, the original Norman spurs having been broken off and lost.

An unvarying tradition, repeated by Leland, tells us Duke Robert was buried between the floor of the choir and the upper side of the vaulting of the crypt. So Robert of Gloucester<sup>1</sup> writes how he was interred before the high altar; and Leland's words are that the duke "lyeth in the midst of the Presbytery," and weightiest of all, we have the entry in Froucester's *Historia*, page 15, "Robertus Curtehouse comes Normannie, obiit apud Castoun de Kerdiff, sed in ecclesia. S. Peter Gloucestriae coram principali altari sepelitur" (A.D. 1134).

In this storied cathedral, so rich in historical associations, there is no spot so suggestive of striking, we might even say of romantic, memories. As we stand by the place marked out by centuries of dependable tradition as the burying-place of the great Crusader, we call to mind that beneath our feet lie the earthly remains of the most remarkable of the men, certainly the most representative figure of the heroes,<sup>2</sup> whose deeds and aims in the first Crusade popularised for two centuries those strangest and saddest of all wars, which we call the Crusades;—before our eyes rests the effigy of the great crusading warrior as he appeared in life.

What thoughts crowd upon us as we stand on this historic spot and gaze at this ancient picturesque effigy, and muse over the sad blood-stained, but withal heroic story of that first and greatest Crusade, in which Duke Robert played the principal part.

It will be worth our while briefly to recall the half-forgotten story of the eventful life of the hero whose bones

<sup>1</sup> Hearne's Chron. page 442.

<sup>2</sup> Such as Bohemund, Tancred, Godfrey de Bouillon, Godfrey's brother and nephew, subsequently kings of Jerusalem, Raymond of S. Gilles, Robert of Flanders, and a crowd of other princes, dukes, and counts—the renowned warriors of that stirring age of chivalry—friends and comrades of Robert.

lie mouldering beneath our feet, and whose pictured effigy is perhaps the most interesting feature in the monuments of our cathedral. It is so romantic, so stirring a recital, that it must add a sad interest to this little account of our cathedral.

Duke Robert was the eldest born of the Conqueror's sons. Between the father and the son seems to have existed a strange jealousy; the son ever claiming from the father an independent position, which was sternly refused; constantly rebelling against the great Conqueror. On one occasion, in Normandy, fighting for his so-called claims, Robert wounded William, who was unhorsed and narrowly escaped death. This crime, almost parricidal, was never forgiven, and when dying the great king formally deprived him of his succession to the crown of conquered England, which he claimed as his own by right of conquest, and gave to his second and favourite son, William Rufus.

It was a strange unhappy character, was Robert's; the Conqueror and his three sons, Robert, Rufus, and Henry Beauclerc, were, no doubt, men of extraordinary ability. The Conqueror and Beauclerc were two of the ablest and most successful of our English kings. William Rufus was no less able, but his life-work and reign were maimed and scarred by his ungovernable and evil passions. The character of Robert, the eldest, was a strange mixture of good and evil. In the years of his early career he was reputed as recklessly extravagant and dissipated, pleasure-loving, idle; a bad son and a worthless ruler. In these years the splendid qualities which subsequently raised him in men's estimation to the position of one of the world's heroes were so completely veiled that men failed to see his conspicuous abilities and powers.

On the death of the Conqueror, in A.D. 1087, Robert ruled in Normandy and William Rufus in England, the



rival brothers hating each other: Robert and his friends viewing Rufus as a usurper; Rufus despising his elder brother as a *fainéant* and wastrel, but all the while dreading him as a dangerous rival, who had superior claims to any he could advance to the coveted crown of England. For some nine years the reputation of Robert as lord of the great Norman duchy steadily declined. In A.D. 1096, the wild passion and fever of the first Crusade affected many of the more conspicuous princes in the countries of the West. Robert, wearied and disappointed with his life, determined to become a Crusader. His motives here are doubtful. It is questionable whether any real devotion actuated his resolve; more probably it was a spirit of restlessness and ambition which prompted him to take the Cross. His reckless career of extravagance, however, had emptied his coffers, and to defray the expenses of the army of followers who without difficulty were induced to follow his standard, he pawned his great duchy to his astute brother and rival, Rufus, for five years, receiving in return a large sum of money.

In the earlier stages of the strange wild march to the Holy Land he seems to have done little to change the general low estimate which had been formed of his powers and character.

In Apulia and South Italy, where some eminent Normans had already established themselves, almost in the position of sovereign princes, Duke Robert was received with all the honour due to his great lineage and undoubted claims. There, the current story runs, he fell in love with Sybil of Conversano, the daughter of Count Geoffrey, a very wealthy and powerful Norman noble, but this great noble or prince declined to entrust his daughter to one who possessed the questionable reputation of Duke Robert; and some have supposed that the great change in Robert's character



was owing to his love for this Sybil. There is no doubt that a great and somewhat sudden change must be dated from this time in the life of the royal adventurer, for we find Robert during the great crusading war acknowledged as one of the three chiefs of the whole army; and as the wars progressed he seems to have been the most conspicuous of the host in valour and ability. In the great battle of Dorylæum, at the bloody siege of Antioch, and in the yet more terrible storming of Jerusalem, he was conspicuous for his daring bravery and military skill. In the stirring story of the Holy War even Godfrey de Bouillon, who was elected by the Crusaders as the first King of Jerusalem, occupies a second place to Duke Robert, whose great military talents added to his splendid prowess evoked general admiration and respect. Although Godfrey was chosen king, the crusading chiefs, to mark their feeling towards Robert, elected his chaplain, Arnolf Malacorona, as the first patriarch of the captured Holy City.

As the Crusaders returned to Europe, they brought news of Duke Robert's prowess, of his marvellous success, of his vast influence in the army; stories of the miraculous star which ever gleamed at the point of Robert's lance were repeated. The old evil repute gave place everywhere to the story of the fame of the great Crusader.

Returning through Apulia, the powerful and wealthy Count Geoffrey willingly allowed his daughter and heiress, Sybil, to become the wife of the Norman duke whose praises were in all the crusading host, and with Sybil he gave a splendid dowry to enable Robert to redeem the pawned Norman duchy.

At this juncture, William Rufus died (A.D. 1100), and Robert and Sybil for a season reigned at Rouen, no one hindering his reinstatement. Sybil, his duchess, was famed not only for her loveliness, but also for her prudence and

talents. She was, too, the heiress of vast wealth. For a while all went well with the great Crusader. Henry Beauclerc might well tremble for his English throne, which was gravely threatened by the splendid fame of his elder brother.

But alas, Sybil, who played so well the part of his good angel, died; and now, when Sybil was gone, and the need for valour and military skill which the first Crusade had evoked existed no longer, the old *fainéant* and wasteful Robert reappeared. He was no match for his astute and able brother, Henry Beauclerc. There was constant war between the brothers. At last Robert was defeated and taken prisoner at Tenchebrai, a castle fortress of one of his adherents, the famous William of Mortain; Robert was brought to England, and for long years was kept in close captivity, being transferred from castle to castle, till at length he died at Cardiff, only a year before the passing away of Henry Beauclerc.

A persistent legend—is it only a legend?—tells us he was blinded by his jealous and victorious brother. Freeman doubts this crowning cruelty — but, alas, the horror is repeated in various dependable chronicles of the time, and we are compelled to recognise its too probable truth.

When on his death-bed, we are told that Robert requested that his remains might be interred in the great Gloucester Abbey.

We have dwelt at length on this true story of the ill-fated eldest son of the Conqueror, the great Crusader, who sleeps his last sleep amidst the loveliness of the choir of Gloucester. We have no memory in our cathedral so romantic, so pathetic, as that of the famous hero, whose striking effigy over his grave arrests attention, and recalls the half-forgotten history of a restless and eventful age.

. . . . .

The expansion of the simple basilican apse, such as that we see in S. Sophia at Constantinople, into a vast choir such as we have in Gloucester, is one of the most striking features in the history of mediæval ecclesiastical architecture. This marked change dates roughly from the last half of the eleventh century. It reached its culminating point in the fourteenth century. The great and no doubt elongated choir of Abbot Wigmore of Gloucester in the middle of the fourteenth century is a conspicuous example of this feature.

In the basilica, this eastern limb was merely a semi-circular apse, projecting but half its width from the line of the transept, which ran out at the east end of the basilica.

In Central Syria, a certain elongation was given to the apsidal sanctuary. This was, at an early date, adopted in some Western churches of importance—notably in the great church of the monastery of S. Gall.

The reason for this elongation of the choir is clear, and must be sought in the desire of the monks to come *within*, while the lay-folk remained *without* the sanctuary.

The choir, as a rule, in the older Romanesque churches was a mere enclosure in the nave. The sanctuary proper was contained in the comparatively small apse at the east end.

### THE EAST WINDOW

But, after all, the principal glory of the faëry choir, so strangely transformed by the great building abbots of the fourteenth century, is the mighty window which, in the form of a wall of glass, closes the east end. This requires a special description.

It is the largest window in England—we may safely say in the world; this enormous transparent wall ever glowing with its delicate colour and silvery glass. It

presents a striking example of the beauties and perhaps of the defects of the stained glass of the fourteenth century. The defect which at once strikes the lover of ancient glass is the want of that rich, deep colouring which the earlier artists of the thirteenth century aimed at before all other considerations. Nothing, however, can be conceived happier than the effect of the great east window here. For a moment, perhaps, one longs for the richly-gemmed windows of Rheims or Chartres—or for the glass in the apse of the neighbouring abbey of Tewkesbury—but only for a moment, for it is quickly seen how such a dark wall of gemmed glass, beautiful though it would have been, could never have lit up the glorious choir of Wigmore, Stanton, and Horton as does so exquisitely the present pale, silvery window, with its background of sapphire and of ruby, with here and there a gleam of yellow gold.

But to go a little more into detail. Wonderfully little has the glass of this vast window suffered from the ravages of weather, and from the yet more destructive fanaticism of revolutionary times. The ever busy and often mischievous restorer, too, has dealt gently with it.

There are in all some forty-nine figures; of these the lynx-eyed experts consider that thirty-seven are absolutely genuine, and the few insertions which make up the forty-nine are generally of old mediæval glass, apparently of the fifteenth century. Of the eighteen armorial shields in the lower lights, thirteen are certainly the identical shields inserted by the survivors of Crécy and the French wars of Edward III. In the lowest compartments, which, however, are scarcely seen from the choir, the stained glass has disappeared. The whole of the striking and gorgeous canopy work in the upper lights, which forms so marked a feature in the window, has been happily untouched.



The subject of the window is the coronation of the Virgin by the Lord. Curiously enough, the figures of Christ and his mother are placed on an equal level, an arrangement that was rarely adopted before the fifteenth century. As a rule, in and before the fourteenth century, the Virgin, in representations of this kind, is pictured kneeling, or sitting at a lower level than our Lord.

Immediately below the richly-coloured canopies, or shrine-work, in the top lights, are depicted winged angels; the second row contains the leading subject of the window—our Lord and the Virgin Mother above described, and the twelve apostles, six on either side. The next or third row contains various saints, and beneath them are figures of ecclesiastics intermingled with one or two kings. In the two lower lights are the coats of arms we have already alluded to. Beneath these, as we have already said, the painted glass has disappeared.

The armorial bearings are those borne by King Edward III., the Black Prince, Henry, Earl of Lancaster, and their knightly companions, such as the lords of Berkeley, Arundel, Pembroke, Warwick, Northampton, and Talbot, who took part in the famous campaigns in which occurred the battle of Crécy and the siege of Calais; they were borne by men who, in some degree, were connected with Gloucestershire.

The window was, in fact, a memorial of the English victory, and may fairly be termed the "Crécy" window.

The general scheme of colour in this superb and fragile historical relic of the great Plantagenet sovereign, Edward III., is marvellously delicate and beautiful. In the background the ruby (flashed glass) is charmingly varied, and even in its deepest hues is luminous, and the tone of the blue can hardly be surpassed. The figures and the little canopies over them are of pearly-white glass, with

the drawing of the faces and other details in brown enamel paint, and some enrichment in silver stain, varying from a lemon-yellow to a deep orange. This soft and delicate treatment gives a wonderful appearance of lightness and brilliance to the whole work.

The luminous pearly look of the white glass is owing to the body of the glass being full of minute air bubbles. Each of these tiny bubbles catches the light, and then reflects it out of the interior of the glass; so that the glass is not merely transparent, but in itself is actually luminous, each little air-bubble being a centre of radiated light.

In the apex of the window, in the topmost light of all, is a figure which has evidently been inserted in some far-back restoration of the work. It does not belong to the original scheme of the artist, and must be dated a century or more later than the rest of the figures. It is the portrait of a pope. Its lofty position is the reason for its escaping the notice it deserves, for it is enriched with small jewels of glass in blue and red, which are fixed on to the surface of the glass, so that they stand out in actual relief, giving an effect of rare richness. It was evidently executed for some position much nearer the eye. This process of jewelling was very costly, and was rarely practised. It is possible that this light was originally in the Lady Chapel.

Professor Middleton, whose judgment in these matters of art ranks very high, writing of the figure design in the window, thus writes: "The drawing of the faces and draperies at Gloucester is specially vigorous and effective. Extraordinary delicacy and precision of touch is to be seen in every line drawn by the glass painter of this window. In point of firmness and certainty of touch, the work reminds one of the drawing on the best painted vases of the Greeks." It must, however, be borne in mind that the faces, and some of the drapery too, have suffered

considerable deterioration owing to the lapse of time, and successive cleansings and reparation work.

It is a difficult window exactly to classify when the custodian is asked to say if it be a Perpendicular window in harmony with the new work of Abbots Wigmore and Stanton and Horton, in the days when Edward III. was king. Emphatically the *general* impression left by this superb wall of jewelled silvery glass on the eye of one fairly trained in styles of architecture, is that of an example of purely Perpendicular work. This at once impresses the eye, it being perfectly in harmony with the singular and striking veil of Perpendicular lace-work hung over the old Norman masonry.

For the masonry of the window, to begin with, is distinctly Perpendicular. The general arrangement of the colours is also purely Perpendicular. Deep lines of ruby and of blue as background are carried up straight, in long lengths of each alternate light. Again, the *blue* is lighter and greyer than is decorated glass, and the figures and the little canopies over them, save that they are slightly relieved with yellow stain, are practically white. This would scarcely be seen in what is known as Decorated glass. On the other hand, the details of all the canopies, especially the details of the great canopies in the upper lights, and even of the smaller canopies over the many figures, certainly belong to the Decorated style. But after all the window may generally be pronounced a *Perpendicular* creation, although it has certain Decorated characteristics.

On the date of the window experts are quite agreed. Here the style of the masonry and the stained glass exactly coincide with the historical testimony of the shields with the armorial bearings. The window belongs to the years 1345-1350, by which date it had evidently been completed and fixed in its present position.



Judging from the arrangement of the coats of arms in the lower lights, it would seem most probable that the donor of this noble historical window was Lord Bradeston, whose shield appears the last of the upper row of shields. He was a Gloucestershire noble, and a vassal of the Lord of Berkeley. Under Edward III., he was governor of the Castle of Gloucester, and a well-known, fortunate, and valiant soldier. He places the arms of Sir Maurice de Berkeley next to his own, but though as a baron he was of higher rank than Sir Maurice, his own arms occupy a less honourable place. They were inseparable companions, Dugdale tells us, and were created bannerets at the same time. Sir Maurice was killed in the siege of Calais.

Before leaving the choir, an eloquent and suggestive passage may be quoted from Bond (*Gothic Architecture in England*) on the effect of the revelation of the glories of the transformed choir of Gloucester on England generally—a revelation which largely contributed to the universal adoption in England of the Perpendicular style:—

“In 1327, Edward II. had been murdered at Berkeley. The Bristol Augustinians dared not risk the animosity of the court party by giving harbour to his corpse. Brave Abbot Thokey conveyed it to Gloucester, and buried it in the old Norman choir of the abbey. Miracles were wrought at the tomb; pilgrims came by thousands from every part of the realm; so vast were their offerings that the Gloucester monks, so the Chronicle tells us, might have rebuilt, had they willed, the whole abbey church. They contented themselves with remodelling the south transept, north transept, and the choir. The works were commenced soon after 1330. Round and above the new shrine of the king and saint the works proceeded, till, *circa* 1350, the vaults were up and the windows glazed.



The scaffoldings were removed and the world saw at last the revelation of a new art world—the glories of Gloucester choir. And so it was that Gloucester choir, being in the fourteenth century so great a centre of English Christianity, was visited and inspected more than any other church in the country, and when the new glass and the new vaults were at length revealed to view, the fame of them passed at once to the furthest ends of the land. Every pilgrim's tale, *circa* 1350, would be of the new vision in English art—the choir of Gloucester."

### THE ORGAN

In the description of the choir and its contents a few words may be added on the great organ, which, placed over the screen, closes effectually the west end of the choir.

The present instrument was by no means the first organ used in the service of the cathedral. Before the Reformation period, on the "Pulpitum" screen, there stood an organ, possibly two organs, but, comparatively speaking, very small ones. The mighty instruments now so general were unknown in mediæval days.

The immediate predecessor of the organ we now see was a Jacobean organ in use in the cathedral before the great civil wars; this was evidently a comparatively small instrument. This had been removed after or in the course of the civil war. It evidently had no place in the maimed service established by the Parliamentarians—an organ then was looked upon as an invention of the Evil One.

The clergy of the Church of England who were reinstated in the cathedral at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, apparently repurchased this small Jacobean organ, but it proved quite insufficient.

The restored dean and chapter determined to build another. The expense of the new organ was defrayed partly out of chapter funds, partly by donations of friends. The cost seems to have been about £600. This sum represents about £3000 or more at the present time. A number of coats of arms, still visible on the pipes, represent the chief donors, among whom Anne Hyde, the first wife of James, Duke of York, afterwards King James II., was the most generous. This first Duchess of York was the mother of Queen Mary, the wife of William of Orange, and of Queen Anne. Her interest in Gloucester Cathedral was through her chaplain, Dr. Walter Blandford, a fellow of Wadham College, one of the prebendaries of the cathedral.

The builders of this organ, which (although enormously increased) is still with us, were Thomas Harris and his better-known son, René or Renatus. It was repaired and renovated by Bernard Schmidt, some time before 1683; was further improved and greatly enlarged by Willis in 1847, and again in 1889-1890. It is undoubtedly a magnificent instrument, one of the noblest in England. Still further additions, however, are desirable.

The case is of oak, and is looked upon as a fine piece of late Renaissance work. Viewed from the choir, it is a striking and even a beautiful object. Seen, however, from the nave, it is poor and quite unworthy of its prominent position in such a church. Compared with the magnificent organ cases of the Low Countries—such as the organ cases (the *buffet d'orgues*) of Haarlem and Bois le Duc, it is sadly deficient. The heraldic enrichments, no doubt, once greatly enhanced its beauty; but they are all faded, and quite undistinguishable when viewed from the floor of the cathedral. It would emphatically be desirable to carefully renew and restore these coats of arms.

## THE AMBULATORY ROUND THE CHOIR

The ambulatory—"circumambient or processional aisle," as it is sometimes more accurately called—is a striking feature in the planning of very many mediæval abbeys and cathedrals. It was originally designed for the convenience of great pilgrim churches, and is never found in churches of the basilican type. The model *par excellence* of this feature in the planning of a great church was probably the Abbey of S. Martin at Tours, for centuries the principal pilgrim church of Gaul. Researches into the history of the earlier and vanished Abbey of S. Martin, which dates from A.D. 472, and the well-known features of the later church of S. Martin, erected after the fire of A.D. 990, which closely followed the lines of the older church, supply us with accurate data here. The model of S. Martin was generally followed in France, and passed over into England through Norman influences—and most of the mighty churches built in England after the Norman Conquest possess this peculiar feature of a processional ambulatory. It was designed for the crowds of pilgrims visiting the shrine of the popular saint to whom generally the church was dedicated. These crowds could move up one aisle, pass behind and round the apse, where the tomb of the saint was usually arranged, and down the other aisle, without retracing their steps; thus obviating the dangers attendant upon extraordinary crowding.<sup>1</sup> It was also convenient—although this was a less obvious reason for the arrangement—for the principal Sunday procession, when the monks and clergy moved round the whole church

<sup>1</sup> As English examples of these imitations of the original plan of the great pilgrim church of Gaul, S. Martin of Tours, we might cite as examples, with certain variations, the well-known planning of Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Norwich, Leominster, Worcester, Winchester, and the Norman Abbey of Westminster, etc.

in order to sprinkle with holy water every altar before the supreme Mass of the week. But it was especially planned for the pilgrim crowd.

This became the vogue in planning the greater churches even where, as in Gloucester, no special saint was buried in the apse of the sanctuary. When, however, later, Gloucester became, after the interment of Edward II., a resort for crowds of pilgrims, it was, of course, much used.

Architecturally, this ambulatory which surrounds the choir is specially interesting. It is not its beauty which arrests us, but it is its strange and peculiar style; looking at it from either of the transepts, a vista of mighty round Romanesque pillars, or rather shafts, with immense low-browed round arches, meet the view. They are evidently of the same school of architecture which produced the nave we have already described, but they clearly belong to a somewhat older period than the nave; several of the shafts towards the east end are scarcely round, they are almost shapeless.

Freeman wonders at them—so like and yet so unlike the lofty round shafts of the nave—but he cannot explain the strange points of difference in what evidently belongs to the same school of architecture. We have already given our theory;—the Romanesque choir and under-church or crypt we consider belong in great part to the yet earlier church of Aldred in Edward the Confessor's time, a work which was interrupted for some years by the troubles consequent upon the Norman Conquest, which followed immediately after the death of Edward the Confessor; the interrupted work being resumed by Serlo, the first Norman abbot, who in A.D. 1087 took up the unfinished work again, and completed the mighty abbey by building the nave and the remaining part of the great pile.

It was over these enormous and massive shafts and



their round low-browed arches we still see in the ambulatory round the choir, that the building abbots of the fourteenth century, Wigmore, Stanton, and Horton, hung, so to speak, that strange and lovely veil of Perpendicular tracery which effectually hid them from sight and formed the present choir; these thick, massive shafts are only seen as we pass round the ambulatory or the triforium directly over the ambulatory, which we shall speak of presently. The startling contrast between the old Romanesque ambulatory, stern and devoid of all ornament, and the light and graceful beauty of the choir is most remarkable. But although they are so close, the contrast does not affect the strange beauty of the choir, the Romanesque ambulatory being completely hidden by the white veil of lace-work of the Perpendicular choir.

The historical sepulchral monuments of the northern ambulatory have been already described. In the south ambulatory, towards the eastern end, there is a striking modern tomb with the effigy of Bishop Ellicott resting on it. It has quite recently been placed there, but, apart from its beauty, it is of comparatively little interest, for, alas, it is but a cenotaph—the remains of the distinguished and well-loved scholar rest far away in Birchington-on-Sea, near Margate.

A huge cope chest has also been placed in the south ambulatory; the precious vestments of rare magnificence it once contained were appropriated and carried away by Henry VIII., when the Benedictine abbey was suppressed in A.D. 1539-1540.

#### THE NORTH TRANSEPT

This was the third great piece of transformation work undertaken by the building abbots of the fourteenth

century. Abbot Wigmore completed the south transept, Abbots Stanton and Horton designed and finished the superb choir, and Horton completed what we term the transformation work by hanging a similar veil of Perpendicular tracery over the old Romanesque work of the north transept. The panelling is bonded into the original masonry with the same skill and perfect finish as in the choir and south transept. The Perpendicular features in the north transept are, however, somewhat more fully developed than in the south transept.

One singular piece of elaborate Early English work which fills up the north side of this north transept at once catches the eye. It is evidently out of place, as the style is utterly different from the Perpendicular veil or casing which covers the whole of the original masonry. Canon Bazeley ingeniously suggests that it was brought from the Early English Lady Chapel, built in A.D. 1227; owing to its great beauty it was thought worthy of preservation when the present Lady Chapel was built in the latter years of the fifteenth century, and was then taken carefully down and erected in the north transept. Other views have, however, been taken, and a much older date for its erection in its present position is suggested. Was it possibly a reliquary? No certain tradition, however, remains of this striking and interesting piece of Early English work. There is but little of this early school of Gothic in the cathedral. It may be usefully studied, as containing some admirable examples of early plate tracery.

At the foot of the steps on the east side of this transept are some very ancient sepulchral stones, which once were adorned with brasses—these have long since disappeared. Tradition tells us that two of these marked the resting-places of Abbots Horton and Boyfield. Boyfield presided over the abbey and monastery in the reign of Richard II.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TRIFORIUM

THE triforium occupies the broad space over the ground floors of the ambulatory round the choir. Most of the more important of the mediæval abbeys and churches contain this peculiar feature. The Gloucester triforium is of great size, and is the largest known. The derivation of the word is somewhat uncertain. It probably, however, can be traced to the post-classical word "transforare," to pierce through; "opus triforiatum" was applied to perforated work in lock plates, brass fenders, etc. Einart defines it as "*un chemin de ronde dont le parvis est ajouré.*" Originally it meant any passage in the thickness of the wall.

The Gloucester triforium is enormous, and was evidently used in the ancient ritual of the church for processions and the like; this is evident from the several chapels with their altars which lead out of it, and from the comparatively broad and easy access to it by the staircases on either side, and from the large windows which light it.

In some churches the triforium seems not to have been used at all; in others, tapestry seems to have been hung down as an extra adornment on certain high festivals, as, for instance, at Winchester, where the hooks still remain from which the tapestry hangings were suspended on the occasion of the marriage of Philip of Spain and Queen Mary of England. Sometimes it was used on great occasions as a gallery whence spectators could view the ceremonies below on the ground floor of the church.

From the Gloucester triforium an admirable view is

obtainable of the manner in which the building abbots of the fourteenth century hung their veil of stone over the old Norman work of the choir. It is especially curious to mark how the workmen, mistaking the design of the Perpendicular Master-Architect, hewed and chipped away the projecting Romanesque capitals on the *inside*, where no veil of stone was intended to be thrown over or fastened to the original work.

The mighty half-barrelled thrusts in the triforium are also specially interesting, as these act as flying buttresses, only *within* instead of outside the building, and help to counteract the great weight or thrust of the lofty choir walls and the groined roof above.

Indeed, with the exception of the slender insignificant buttresses outside, these half-barrelled thrusts or flying buttresses are the only apparent support of the mighty choir clerestory and its massive roof of stone and lead.

The east end of this great triforium is most curious; it originally extended with a like width round the east end of the Norman church, but at the time when the fourteenth century work of the present choir was carried out, the whole of the east end of the old Norman choir, with the corresponding part of the triforium above, was swept away, in order to make room for the gigantic east window—the small east chapel alone being allowed to remain.

As the means of entrance to this east chapel of the triforium had now disappeared, the narrow gallery, called the "Whispering Gallery," was made, and ingeniously carried by two bridges *outside* the great east window—from the south triforium to the little chapel, and from thence to the north triforium. A whisper in a very low tone can be easily and distinctly heard from one end of this gallery to the other.



A singular and somewhat ghastly picture of the last judgment now stands at the western end of the south triforium. It is of considerable size, measuring 9 feet 10½ inches by 7 feet 7¼ inches.

This picture was found in A.D. 1718 against the east wall<sup>1</sup> of the nave behind wainscoting adjoining the seats occupied by the clergy when sermons were preached in the nave. It is apparently painted in tempera (not in oil) on a white plaster ground laid on oak planking. Considerable portions of the original frame remain—which once were gilt. In the centre of the painting our Saviour is represented as sitting on a rainbow, surrounded by cherubim. On the left of His head is a lily, a symbol of mercy, directed towards the saved; on the right a sword is pointed towards the cursed. In the lower part of the picture the dead are represented as rising from their graves.

On the left the righteous are being marshalled by angels holding crosses, while the wicked are being carried off by demons. The various details of the fate of the wicked are simply horrible.

The upper left-hand corner represents the new Jerusalem; the architecture is of a classic character, as we should expect from a picture of the Renaissance period. The righteous are entering the gate, over which S. Peter, with a key, and an angel are standing.

In the lower corner is the entrance to hell; the terror and agonies of the damned are depicted with fearful realism. It has been suggested that the picture once formed part of the decorations of the high altar, the dimensions agreeing with the original altar-screen, but one is loth to believe that an ornament of this description ever occupied such a place; still the position of the famous altar-piece at

<sup>1</sup> This was apparently the wall of the screen.

Dantzic, of which this seems to have been a somewhat coarse epitome, rather favours the gloomy hypothesis.

Mr. Scharf, in his paper in the *Archæologia* (vol. xxvi., pp. 370-391), observes that this is one of the most important specimens of English painting of the period which he remembers to have seen. He reproduces it in an engraving. The picture, he considers, was painted at the end of the reign of Henry VIII. or (more probably) in the time of Edward VI. One curious detail deserves notice—the Virgin Mary is unrepresented in the crowd of saints and angels accompanying our Lord.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TOWER

HIGH above the soaring choir, the transepts, and the long Romanesque nave rises the stupendous central tower. No suspicion of its existence at all can be gathered from the interior of the cathedral. There is no lantern<sup>1</sup> to mark its position, as at Hereford and in a few other great churches; the beautiful and elaborate vaulting of the choir ceiling completely veils it. Only a small blue disc in this ceiling, a little to the east of the organ-loft, marks the place of the opening through which, tradition tells us, that "Great Peter," the largest of the Gloucester bells, was originally hoisted to its position in the lowermost of the bell chambers in the tower.

But outside the cathedral, it is by far the most striking and arresting feature. It dominates not only the majestic pile of the cathedral, but the whole city clustered round it. Its great size, its imposing height, its inimitable grace, perhaps best appear when looked at from a little distance. As this distance is increased, the city gradually disappears, and only the vast bulk of the great church catches the eye,

<sup>1</sup> The singular and striking window high up at the west end of the choir is a feature which has been described as "unique." It really is the survival of the old Norman tower. Its existence in its present position is owing to the pitch of the nave roof being so much lower (some twenty feet) than the pitch of the choir roof. In the reconstruction and rebuilding of the present great Perpendicular tower, room was thus found for a portion of the old lighting arrangements of the earlier tower. Its singular presence is most effective, but to the ordinary observer its position would never suggest its first origin.

with the noble mass of the central tower crowning the noble pile. The following striking and eloquent words<sup>1</sup> descriptive of the general appearance may be quoted: "No matter from whence one looks at it (the tower) the charm is there. Seen from the gardens in the side streets close by, when the pear trees are in bloom, or in the full blaze of a hot summer's day, or again in the autumn when the leaves are beginning to turn . . . it is always full of beauty.

"On a bright hot day, the pinnacles seem so far off in the haze as to suggest a dream of fairyland. On a wet day, after a shower, the tower has the appearance of being so close at hand, that it seems almost to speak. Viewed by moonlight, the tower has an unearthly look, which cannot well be described."

This was not the first central tower of the ancient abbey church. A low mid-tower—not improbably one somewhat similar to the Romanesque tower of Tewkesbury Abbey, was among the works of Serlo in the last decade of the eleventh century.

In 1222, when Henry III. was king, this tower was certainly raised higher, and considerably altered. Canon Bazeley suggests that the rebuilding or alterations consisted mainly in the building of a lofty spire on the original square massive Romanesque tower,<sup>2</sup> a portion of which

<sup>1</sup> *A Description of the Cathedral Church of Gloucester*, by Mr. Massé—a generally accurate little book, to the value of which the author of these pages desires to bear his testimony.

<sup>2</sup> There appear to have been once, two more smaller towers of unequal size at the west end of the abbey. The smaller of these was a Bell Tower; this stood originally at the north-west end of the nave. It was burnt in one of the many fires which the Chronicles tell us played havoc with parts of the old abbey. The larger of these two western towers which originally stood at the west end of the nave in part fell down with a crash about the year 1170 whilst Mass was being said in the choir.



still forms the base of the present great Perpendicular tower. This "spire," if it were a spire, we read was the work of Helias, the sacrist of the abbey. The "spire," or the upper portion of Helias' mid-tower of A.D. 1222, was taken down between A.D. 1450 and 1460, and the present superb Perpendicular tower was erected on the old Norman foundations. The architect of this great and daring new work was Robert Tully, a monk of the abbey.

It ranks still—though some four centuries and a half have elapsed since it was built—as one of the greatest towers in existence. Indeed, with the exception of the mid-towers of Canterbury and Lincoln, perhaps there is nothing comparable in any other part of the world.<sup>1</sup>

It can best be compared with Canterbury, which is a little later in date, the Gloucester tower having been erected in 1450-1460, and the mid-tower of Canterbury 1495-1507. Canterbury is slightly higher, being two hundred and thirty-five feet, while the height of Gloucester is two hundred and twenty-five feet. Both of these towers form admirable centres to the masses of building clustered round them. But the light and graceful tracery of the parapets, and of the pinnacles of the tower here, is that which gives especial beauty and grace to the mid-tower of Gloucester.

The greatest danger to which this special glory of our cathedral has ever been exposed, was from the destructive zeal of the Parliamentarians of the Commonwealth, who apparently at one time meditated the total destruction of the cathedral. We read how instruments and tackle

<sup>1</sup> Of course, the superb and enormous tower of the Palace of Westminster is excepted in this generalisation.

The question often suggests itself, will this Victoria Tower, which now so proudly soars over the Senate House of England, last through centuries, like the great mediæval piles we are referring to?

had been provided "for to take down the tower," but owing to the exertions of certain influential citizens with Cromwell, this disgraceful work was given up, and the glorious church of Aldred and Serlo, of Wigmore, of Horton and Tully, was granted to the mayor and burgesses of the city in the year 1657.

Turning again to the building work of 1450-1460. The old tower was in great part taken down and rebuilt by Abbot Seabroke. The architect, as we have said, was a monk of the abbey, Robert Tully, who was afterwards Bishop of S. David's. It was a most daring work. The upper part, including the above-suggested "steeple," was taken carefully down, and the new tower was erected on the original eleventh-century foundations, which were left as far as the springing of the flying arches; the great piers supporting the new Perpendicular tower are undoubtedly Norman, and Norman untouched. The present tower is certainly double the height of the old Norman building, but is of much less thickness of masonry; there are marked gradations, however, in the thickness of the new (Perpendicular) work — the solid walls immediately above the groining of the choir being five feet six inches thick; those of the chamber above containing the Great Bell three feet six inches; those of the lower stage of the belfry somewhat over two feet thick; and of the upper stage of the belfry only eight and a half inches to ten inches! These measurements refer to the solid parts of the walls, exclusive of the projections of panel work and buttress, but even allowing for these latter pieces of masonry, the slightness of the structure is most remarkable, especially looking at the great size of the tower, and the large and heavy pinnacles carried on the angles; and, too, it must be borne in mind that there is another important factor with a building of this kind and in such a position, it being fully open to the

effect of gales, viz., that of wind pressure. Lesser elements of weight and disturbance have also to be allowed for, the nine bells (Great Peter, alone, weighing nearly three tons) and the massive floors, not forgetting the heavy leaden roof with its great supporting beams, add appreciably to the weight, while the sway and vibration of the bells, when a peal is being rung, are really an unknown quantity.

Mr. Waller,<sup>1</sup> the resident cathedral architect, whose well-known skill and a life-long intimate acquaintance with this noble historical building gives especial weight to his opinion, states "that in order to fully gauge the stability of the supports beneath this tremendous tower, the weight of the whole structure has been calculated, so far as it is possible to do so, but such a calculation is extremely difficult to make, owing to the numerous openings and projections, and can only be roughly approximate; but the result shows that the weight resting on the four large (Norman-Romanesque) piers which virtually support the tower is greater than we should dare to put upon them at the present day."

It is clear that the Perpendicular builders of the tower in the fifteenth century seem to have recognised that they had no great margin of safety in their new work, and to assist in securing stability, they introduced flying buttresses wherever such could be adopted, and they did not hesitate to carry them across openings or windows, or, in fact, anywhere that seemed desirable. In one singular instance, at the north-east angle of the tower, a small stairway, for instance, has been filled with solid masonry and cement to give additional support.

<sup>1</sup> The above statistical details are gathered from Mr. Waller's *Notes on the Tower*, largely gathered together when the late extensive repairs, which went on for several years, were in progress.

Much criticism has been spent upon the precarious nature of much of Norman masonry. It is abundantly clear, however, that in Gloucester the masonry of the four great piers upon which the tower mainly rests must have been simply admirable, for though four centuries and a half have passed since the mighty Perpendicular tower has been laid upon them, according to the most searching examination there has been, comparatively speaking, but little dangerous or serious settlement.

. . . . .

But although careful and prolonged investigations have shown that no serious or dangerous settlement has taken place, and that no movement apparently is at present going on, the urgent necessity of extensive repairs to the tower—the distinguishing glory not only of this cathedral, but of all Perpendicular architecture—has been recognised. For years, with the aid of a strong glass, it could be seen that portions of the stone-work were badly decayed and broken, and heavy pieces of stone from time to time kept falling on to and gravely damaging the roofs below. An elaborate and careful scaffolding was lately erected, and it was found positively that grass was growing in many of the joints, and this in important situations, such as in the sills and large string courses; some of these had opened to a depth of one foot six inches, and water was thereby conveyed constantly into the walls.

After some three or more years' anxious and costly work, the whole of this repair work has quite recently been completed,<sup>1</sup> and every stone of the great tower within and

<sup>1</sup> Although it is clear from the evident displacement of the staircase turret at the south-east angle of the tower, where the wall is eleven inches out of upright at the top, leaning away from the building, that at some period (probably long ago) some considerable movement in the tower must have taken place, yet the light stone arches (the slight flying arches) across



without has been examined, and, where found necessary, has been withdrawn and replaced; and the resident architect (Mr. Waller) has given his opinion that now the magnificent tower may last, if taken care of, as long as it has hitherto done.

### THE BELLS OF GLOUCESTER IN THE TOWER

The bells of Gloucester are celebrated, not only for their sweetness of tone, but for their antiquity. In this famous peal, four of the bells were undoubtedly cast before the Reformation.

The principal bell is known as *Great Peter*, the weight of which is about 6500 lbs., nearly three tons. It has the note C<sub>4</sub>. It is hung on a very fine oak framing and is the solitary occupant of the lower chamber of the tower, which, however, it now shares with the glass house enclosing the clock. The exact date of this great bell is unknown, but it was certainly cast *before* the dissolution of the abbey in A.D. 1539-1540. It bears the arms of the abbey, a sword in pale, surmounted by two keys in saltire, and on the shoulder, the arms of the founder—three bells—with the legend: *Me fecit fieri conventus nomine Petri*.

The other and smaller bells are in the second story of the tower. Of these:

Bell No. 2 was cast *circa* A.D. 1350, or a very few years later. It bears the legend: *San̄ce Petre ora pro nobis*.

Bell No. 5. The date is uncertain, but it was cast before the dissolution of the abbey. It bears the legend: *In multis annis resonet Campana Johannis*.

the transepts have apparently never been affected in the slightest degree. The construction and arrangement of these is such that had there been any great settlement in the tower, these must have been more or less dislocated.

Bell No. 6. The exact date is uncertain, but it was certainly cast before the Reformation. It bears the legend: *Sum Rosa pulsata mundi Maria vocata.*

*These four bells*, including "Great Peter" and bells 2, 5, and 6, were cast before the dissolution of the abbey. Of the remaining five bells, which were cast since the Reformation period, the dates and other details are as follow:—

Bell No. 1 was cast *circa* A.D. 1598, with the legend: *Robart Newcombe of Leicester made mee, Doctor Lewis Danee (Dean) 1598.*

The last word is thus strangely spelt, to rhyme with *mee*.

Bell No. 3, cast in 1810, with the legend: *John Rudhall Gloucester fecit, 1810.*

Bell No. 4 was cast like No. 3 in 1810, also by John Rudhall of Gloucester.

Bell No. 7, cast in 1626, had originally the legend: *Missi de celis habeo nomen Gabrielis.*

Bell No. 8 bore the legend: *Dan. Newcombe, Decan.* Its date is A.D. 1736; with the initials A. R. of the founder, Abraham Rudhall.

The Rudhalls alluded to above were distinguished Gloucester bell-founders for about one hundred and fifty years. The Gloucester foundry was closed in A.D. 1828.

There are monuments to the Rudhalls in the cloisters near the door of the chapter house.

At the time of the dissolution of the monastery by Henry VIII., there were nine bells hanging in the tower. Of these, as is shown in the list given above, four of the original bells are still in their places, one of them being "Great Peter." The other five have, as shown in the table, during the last three and a half centuries been recast.

It is unusual to find the original pre-Reformation bells in their place in the towers of old abbey churches. As a rule, they were confiscated at the dissolution of the monastic house, the metal of which the bells were made being of considerable value. To this rule, Gloucester and the neighbouring cathedral of Bristol are among the exceptions.

From a deed still extant, containing an inventory drawn up for the commissioners of King Edward VI., A.D. 1553, of church goods, etc., "redelyverd" to the dean and chapter of Gloucester, to be kept until the king's pleasure shall be known, we read of "one grete bell whereuppon the cloke strykithe, and eight other grete bells whereuppon the chyme goethe, hangynge in the tower."

It is probable that certain of the citizens of Gloucester interceded on behalf of the chimes which they loved, and that their prayers were listened to.

The chimes in question, which are the successors of the pre-Reformation carillon, still play four tunes, which are pricked upon a self-acting barrel.

The first tune was a composition of Dr. Jefferies, a canon of S. Paul's, London, in 1791. The second was composed by W. Hayes, Mus. Doc., once a chorister boy in the cathedral, who died in 1777. The third was the work of Dr. Malchair, *circa* 1760-1770. The fourth was composed by Dr. Stevens, who also in his time had been a Gloucester chorister.

There was a bell-foundry at Gloucester certainly as early as the reign of Edward III., and the Gloucester master bell-founder had a reputation far and wide.

Probably this foundry owed its existence to the monks of the monastery of S. Peter, Gloucester. The early bell-founders were tenants and dependents of the great abbey.

## THE CLOCK

The cathedral clock is in the lower story of the tower, which it shares with the bell "Great Peter." The present clock is carefully enclosed in a large glass house, and is an admirable specimen of the craft of clock-makers. It was only completed in quite recent years. The donor was Sir Thomas Bazley, of Hatherop Castle, Gloucestershire. The makers were Messrs. Dent, of London.

The hours are struck on the bell "Great Peter" above described.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CRYPT

THE description of the large crypt which lies beneath the eastern end of the church has been conveniently left to this late chapter of our guide. The Lady Chapel, its story and present condition, will follow immediately after; it being, comparatively speaking, in its present state, a later addition to the cathedral. This great Lady Chapel was built in the last half of the fifteenth century.

The crypt is entered by a door on the east side of the south transept (already described). The door in question opens directly on a flight of steps which leads into the crypt.

There are notable English crypts at Canterbury, York, Winchester, Gloucester, and Worcester, to which may be added the small, but very curious and, in parts, more ancient one at Ripon.

The great Gloucester crypt now presents a somewhat forlorn, almost a ruined appearance. The altars are gone, the side chapels are defaced, the massive walls are discoloured, the pavement is somewhat rough and uneven; no trace of the ancient colour and gold, which once adorned it, remains.

Only in quite late years have the custodians of the cathedral paid any attention to this most precious relic of Aldred and Serlo, the Saxon and Norman builders of the eleventh century, and their care has been simply confined to the necessary repairs to the masonry which,

however, was too solid and massive to require much attention.

The antiquary and historical student, however, will rejoice at this seeming neglect, as nothing has been done in the past three hundred and fifty or four hundred years which can interfere with their observation of the ancient details. They are most interesting, and are indeed more easily studied now than would have been possible even in the early years of the sixteenth century, when the Benedictine dwellers in the Gloucester Abbey and Monastery were ejected by Henry VIII., for everything which then veiled the old masonry has been long removed.

But the reverent worshipper is, perhaps, naturally dismayed, as he wanders through this ancient, deserted, and unused sanctuary.

As we have remarked, the present state of the Gloucester crypt is everything that the lynx-eyed and curious antiquary could desire. Unhindered by any attempt at restoration, or by any furniture or decoration, he can at his leisure examine the original masonry of the different early builders, now bare and stripped, and can draw his conclusions as to the dates of this, for the most part, the most ancient work in the cathedral.

The arrangement of this great subterranean church follows pretty closely the ordinary arrangement of the other more important crypts on the Continent and in England. It extends underneath the choir overhead, the aisles surrounding the choir, and the small projecting chapels, thus exactly corresponding with the details of the upper story.

Its walls are about ten feet thick, and the aisle floor is on an average eight feet below the surface of the soil on the outside of the building. The centre part is divided by two rows of small columns irregularly placed, from which





*Photo.*

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*

THE CRYPT OF THE CATHEDRAL

South Ambulatory, eleventh-century work



spring round arches carrying the floor of the choir above. In design, these small columns in the centre of the crypt vary greatly as to their capitals, abaci, and bases, all of which are strikingly different from the half-columns with cushion capitals attached to the outer walls, on which rest the ribs they mutually carry. These small columns in the centre are purely Romanesque in character, but of an earlier character than the columns of the ambulatory which runs round the central part of the crypt. So different and archaic, indeed, are these two rows of columns of the central division of the crypt, as to make it a serious question whether these little columns do not belong to a yet older church even than Aldred's.

As regards the enormously thick semicircular columns in the ambulatory which runs round the inner portion of the crypt, although of great antiquity and of Romanesque-Norman work, it is evident that they do not belong to the original structure, but they are, in fact, casings built round and enveloping the earlier and smaller piers; and the second row of ribs, which can be easily discerned, springing from their capitals, are built under, with a view of supporting and strengthening the earlier vaulting. It can be seen that this earlier and inner work has been markedly crushed out of shape by the weight above.

There are at the east end two huge shapeless piers, evidently of Perpendicular work, no doubt erected in the fourteenth century to bear up and carry the vastly increased weight of the choir which, as we have seen, was carried up to a much greater height in the new works carried out in the abbey by the great building abbots of the reign of Edward III.

Thus we have in the crypt of Gloucester, masonry of four distinct dates:

(1) The huge and almost shapeless piers at the east end

are unmistakably the work of the Perpendicular period, and date from about the middle of the fourteenth century; and the reason of their being built there is clear. The greater additional weight of the raised and highly-ornamented choir of the reign of Edward III. rendered necessary additional and yet stronger foundations, and these great piers were erected for that purpose. They have done their work well, for they have sufficed to carry the extra weight of the changed choir; and although about five centuries and a half have elapsed since they were built up, no sign of subsidence or of movement in the crypt has anywhere appeared.

(2) The bulky half-columns with the cushion capitals in the ambulatory which surrounds the inner portion or centre of the crypt are most probably the work of Serlo at the close of the eleventh century.

(3) The earlier date of the smaller pillars round which these massive half-columns are built is uncertain. In accordance with the theory of the dates of the building of the east end of the old abbey which we have already advanced, they most probably formed part of Aldred's unfinished church, A.D. 1048-1058, when Edward the Confessor was king.

(4) We pass to the inner division of the crypt. Here, the little double row of columns belong without doubt to an earlier period than any of Serlo's work. That they represent a part of Aldred's building is highly probable, but it is an interesting question whether these small Romanesque columns were not the work of a yet earlier school of builders even than the time of Aldred, in which case, when Aldred rebuilt the church in the days of the Confessor king, he probably re-used these pillars belonging to the older church which he replaced. On the whole, however, it seems safer to ascribe this part of the church

entirely to Aldred, although these little columns in the centre seem, to some experts, to suggest possibly a yet older date.

Radiating from the ambulatory which encircles the inner portion are five chapels, exactly corresponding to the chapels which radiate from the ambulatory round the choir above.

Most of the work in these is evidently of the time of Serlo, the first Norman abbot (close of the eleventh century), but some of them contain the ruined remains of sedilia, piscinae, altars, etc., also of an early date, but subsequent to Serlo's period. One of these on the north side was vaulted and decorated as late as the latter years of the thirteenth century.

In this sad and melancholy underground church, which sleeps its death sleep beneath the glorious Gloucester minster, with its low-browed arches, its massive heavy pillars of different dates, its brown and faded tints, its ruined altars, here and there with its scarred and broken tracery—there is a strange pathos which goes home to many hearts, for it tells the story of a long-forgotten life, of superstition it may have been, but still of an ancient prayer-filled life in the midst of a rude and war-filled age. It seems to tell of men, world-weary, sin-weary, who had crept in here to pray and to meditate during the last few months, perhaps years, of a life spent in very different scenes from the crypt and cloisters of the stately abbey church which they had chosen as their still and quiet home.

Here in this crypt, on these grey old stones, had knelt in the lone agony of soul-prayer many a Norman baron who had fought at Hastings or in the earlier Crusades, who had charged under the proud Plantagenet banner on stricken fields, men who had sinned deeply in their day

and who in sorrow and remorse had sought peace in the great Gloucester House of Prayer, and probably had found it. The memories of prayer are many in this lonely and desolate crypt.

Nor does it require much imagination to believe that here were gathered a yet earlier group of warriors and courtiers than the men who fought at Hastings and the earlier crusading wars, and who mourned with bitter regret the awful woe which they and their dread master, the Conqueror, had worked in Saxon England.

And in this crypt, too, probably the sainted Confessor king had often prayed, and with him that group of warriors and statesmen who made up his brilliant court so often held at Gloucester—men who live in the striking but not untrue romance of Bulwer, known as *Harold*—Earl Godwin, his valiant sons Gurth and Leofwin, Tostig and Harold, and perhaps with them Githa, the mother of Harold, and Harold's hapless love, Edith of the swan-neck.

The gorgeous choir above, with its wealth of colour and gold, with its beautiful carved stalls, its vast translucent window, still gleaming with its old silvery light, with its wondrous and matchless roof, all tell *still* of services of song and prayer—of song and prayer positively unbroken for eight long centuries—services of prayer and praise offered to God and His Christ, changed it may be, adapted it may be, to successive generations, but ever unbroken, now as in long past times ever ascending incense-like to the awful throne in Heaven. But in this grey and solitary crypt all this is now but a memory. The under-church of Gloucester is silent now.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE LADY CHAPEL

THE extreme east end of the choir, immediately behind the high altar and the mighty wall of glass, the east window, which soars above the altar and floods the choir with its soft and silvery light, is pierced with a somewhat low-browed arched entrance, which leads into a small vestibule, the principal decorative feature of which is a beautiful roof with a small but exquisite fan-tracery vaulting.

Beyond this little vestibule, the stranger, visiting the cathedral for the first time, is astonished to see before him another church, as it seems, of considerable size and of rare and delicate beauty, how large is at first uncertain, so perfect are its proportions. This church or chapel "annexe" was erected in the last years of the mediæval period, to the honour, and for the veneration of, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

If, at the east end of the old choir of Aldred, or of Serlo the friend of Lanfranc, there was a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, which is, however, doubtful, that original chapel could only have been a very small building exactly corresponding to the old Romanesque east apsidal chapel, which still forms one of the chevet or group of east apsidal chapels of the crypt beneath.

There is a singular, perhaps a unique arrangement on the part of the old Norman-Romanesque builders of Gloucester Abbey, in the chapels leading out of the east or choir end. There were three stories of these chapels,

one over the other, exactly corresponding in size, and probably, originally, in internal arrangement. The *first* was in the crypt, the *second* was on the ground floor, so to speak, of the abbey, and the *third* on the level of and leading out of the vast triforium of the choir. Most of these little chapels, one over the other, are still very much as the Romanesque builders left them.

The first definite mention of a Lady Chapel in this abbey church appears early in the thirteenth century, about the year 1222, when the lord of the neighbouring manor of Sandhurst (a village about three miles from the city of Gloucester), named Ralph de Wylington, and his wife, Olympias, gave to the monks of the abbey of S. Peter the money for erecting a chapel in honour of the Mother of our Lord.

There is some doubt whether this Lady Chapel of the De Wylingtons was an entirely new edifice, or whether it was not an enlargement and re-ornamentation of the little central Norman chapel in the chevet of the choir apse, a reconstruction of a little chapel which may already have been dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Ralph and Olympias de Wylington, in addition to building the chapel, settled a yearly sum on the monastery of S. Peter to provide lights to burn for ever before the altar of S. Petronilla—an altar which had stood from time immemorial in the original chapel. Petronilla evidently, from a very early period, was regarded as the virgin daughter of S. Peter. A tradition current in the abbey story, dating as far back as the eighth century, connects in some way the abbey of S. Peter with this once famous S. Petronilla, who in far back days, the abbey records tell us, possessed in or adjacent to the church, a chapel dedicated to her.

This "Wylington" chapel, from 1222-1224, continued

to be the "Lady Chapel" of the abbey until 1470-1499, when it completely disappeared, and gave place to the present superb Mary Chapel.

It is presumably the second largest in England, only yielding precedence to the magnificent and unique Mary Chapel of Westminster, generally known as Henry the Seventh's Chapel.

Although this Gloucester "annexe" dates from the last period of Perpendicular architecture, apologists for the monastic system fairly point to it as a striking example of the vigour and power of the monk artist in the age of the great confiscation. Surely, they argue, when the arbitrary and cruel decree of King Henry VIII. swept monk and friar out of the English realm, the brain that could plan and the hand that could carry out the fair creation of the Lady Chapel of Gloucester had not lost their cunning and skill.

The Lady Chapel of Gloucester is no ordinary annexe to one of the most striking of the world's Homes of Prayer. Some four hundred years ago, when the monk-builder had exhausted his loving care and matchless taste upon this noble abbey of the great Benedictine Order, when little remained for him to work at and to adorn in the Norman nave or Plantagenet choir—he turned his attention to the extreme eastern end of the great church, to the annexe of the De Wylingtons, and determined to change the comparatively diminutive "Mary Chapel" into a something no less beautiful but quite different from the awful solemn nave which told of the austere spirit of the age of the Conqueror, into something quite different from the strange confusion of beauty presented by the choir as designed by the men who lived in the days of the splendour of the third Edward.

The result of their handiwork was the Lady Chapel, the scarred beauty of which we look on and wonder at now.

Very different was the conception of the monk-architect of Edward IV. and Henry VII. from anything that his predecessor artists had thought out. The Saxon architect and his immediate Norman successors aimed at building up triumphs of stone—massive and stately; of stone adorned with gold and lines of colour; of stone eloquent with sacred symbol teaching, but dependent for *light* almost altogether on the artificial rays of many lamps and countless tapers. The Plantagenet artist, different from his fathers in the craft, had, it is true, enriched his soaring choir with vast windows, rich with many colours, illuminating the building with floods of coloured light, and indeed gave us that superb and matchless window east of the choir, which not a few still regard as the chief of the many strange, beautiful things for which the Gloucester Abbey is justly famed.

But it was left for the monk-designers of the days of Edward of York and of Henry Tudor to add a great limb to their mighty abbey almost entirely composed of *glass*. It was indeed a bold and daring conception, and one which no modern architect would venture to design. The walls, indeed, seem mostly composed of fragile crystal held together with delicate traceried stonework, all so open and apparently so slight, that it would appear that the south-west gales which often sweep up the Severn Vale from the sea would speedily make an end of them. Yet these walls, this strange fragile work, have resisted; this delicate and exquisite wall of glass and slender stone lacework has withstood for four hundred years the slow sap of sunshine and of storm, and what was yet more wonderful, it has endured through a long period of sad neglect—but its end was sadly near. Some forty or more years back it was finally closed for any divine service. The rain poured through the broken roof, the wind drove



through the beautiful stonework in which the vast windows were set, through the ill-arranged common glass which replaced the fair, original designs of pictured saint and martyr in the windows, heedlessly or mischievously broken, perhaps by the mistaken servants of Edward VI., but more probably by the merciless Puritan soldiers of Oliver Cromwell. It had become almost a ruin, and was finally completely shut off from the choir, to keep out the cold draughts of air which chilled the main building of the cathedral.

But brighter days were in store for this supreme effort of monastic skill. It has been tenderly and carefully repaired, not restored. The broken roof is perfect now; the shattered mullions and ruined transoms of the mighty windows have been skilfully replaced; the dust and dirt of years of neglect have been removed from carved wall and fretted roof. The floor, sadly shattered, has been replaced stone by stone, tile by tile; nothing has been changed. The rough altar rails, which we believe to have been a thought of Archbishop Laud when he was Dean of Gloucester, are preserved — a precious memorial of the care and reverent work of one of earth's ill-fated great ones. And, lastly, the huge windows, the most costly work of all, are again filled with glass, for the chief feature of the chapel was its bright translucent walls; and the new stained or painted glass is judged by the chiefest experts in England as not unworthy of its prominent and conspicuous position.

Once more the barriers which separated the once damp and wind-swept chapel of "Our Lady" from the cathedral, of which it was so lovely an adjunct, have been taken away, and it is again the home of constant services of prayer and praise.

This great Mary Chapel of Gloucester, apparently, was never finished. The old monk-artists were never in a

hurry, and the elaborate scheme of decoration was probably interrupted by the storm and unrest of the Reformation period, when the monastery was in the end broken up. It is doubtful if the countless niches were ever filled with the statuary originally planned, while the scheme of colouring seems never to have been completed. The remains of colour in the panel work beneath the windows tell us how richly this part of the chapel was decorated; but higher up no traces of colour have been discovered. It is quite possible that successive coats of whitewash have completely obliterated the old lines of colour and gold. The windows, however, large and small, to the number of twenty-five, were evidently once filled with rich stained glass. The east window, it is true, still preserves the ancient pre-Reformation coloured glass, but beautiful though it be with its rich and brilliant colouring, it is but a mosaic of ancient glass, made up partly from the original window, partly from pieces of glass from other parts of the cathedral—some, we think probably, from the large windows of the clerestory of the choir.

The question of the beautiful tender colouring which evidently once adorned the Lady Chapel requires a few more words. We have stated that the colour remains can only now be certainly traced as far up as the lower lights of the great windows, and we believe the troublous times put a stop to the completion of the original colour design. But it may have been that the artist-monk stayed his hand for a season, wishful first to mark the effect of the vast windows when filled with jewelled glass. It is at least possible that he dreamed of a new effect, somewhat different from the usual mediæval setting of coloured and gilded stone, conceiving that pure white walls richly carved would be an effective setting to the great windows ablaze with colour—a white and silver setting to countless sparkling

gems, of ruby, sapphire, and amethyst. Such a design which would largely have omitted the usual lavish expenditure of colour on the panelled walls, is possible: for it must be remembered that the Gloucester Lady Chapel, with its huge windows, is a very palace of glass, and the monk-artist may have planned the whole design with a view to an effective and somewhat novel setting to what was, after all, *the* feature of this, almost the last effort of the great Benedictine Order in England.

Still it is, on the whole, an open question, the original design of the wall decoration immediately round the great windows.

But there is no doubt respecting the groined ceiling. The ceiling of this noble Mary Chapel has been justly described as one of the grandest Perpendicular roofs<sup>1</sup> that has ever been made. There is no doubt here that, had time been given, this pale white ceiling would, like the almost similar choir roof, have been clothed with gold enrichments and with delicate lines of colour. The writer of this little account of his cathedral hopes one day to see this vaulting coloured like the similar work in the choir vault. If this were carefully carried out, now that the exquisite stained glass in the windows is well-nigh completed, the Lady Chapel of Gloucester would present a noble example of the mediæval glory of colour.

The once splendid reredos, now hopelessly ruined and broken, is happily veiled by delicate velvet hangings of tender blue, thus fairly supplying sufficient colour to the east end. I should earnestly deprecate any attempt to restore this once elaborate work of mediæval art. It still, in its sad and pathetic scarred state, possesses so many traces of painting and design, that it would be

<sup>1</sup> This roof is almost an exact copy of the splendid choir roof already described.

indeed a pity to deprive the student of mediæval art of such a contemporary object-lesson of painted decoration, ruined and broken though it be.

Reverting to the windows of the Lady Chapel, the many precious fragments of ancient glass, chiefly consisting of tops of canopies, have been carefully preserved and reset in their old position. The almost countless little suns—the *rose en soleil*—a Yorkist badge—are especially worthy of attention. They tell us of a little piece of graceful flattery on the part of the old glass-artist to the reigning House of York, do these little flaming and coloured suns, of which Shakespeare in the opening lines of his *King Richard III.* writes thus: "Now is the winter of our discontent made glorious summer by this sun of York."

There are several monuments and sepulchral slabs in the Lady Chapel possessing a certain interest, but of little historical value. Three of these monuments are curious and show how strangely ineffective and inappropriate for a sepulchral effigy is any change of attitude from the well-known mediæval recumbent position. (1) Elizabeth Williams—a life-size effigy raised on an elbow with a child, a painful and unrestful pose, bearing the date of A.D. 1622. (2) Margaret Clent, A.D. 1623—a small kneeling figure. This is, however, a graceful and even a beautiful wall decoration, and might well be copied as a memorial tablet in the present day. The third is a large and somewhat obtrusive standing figure of Sir John Powell, a judge of the Court of King's Bench, A.D. 1713, in judicial robes. It is in its way a well-executed piece of work, but sadly out of place in this exquisite late mediæval building. Some of the original stonework has been positively cut away to make room for it. It is a regrettable addition to the Lady Chapel,





*Photo.*

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*

THE LADY CHAPEL OF THE CATHEDRAL, LOOKING EAST

Erected in the fifteenth century



but no one would, for a moment, suggest its removal, for it has occupied its present place for some two centuries. In one of the side chapels in the little transept on the north side there is a large recumbent figure of Goldborough, an Elizabethan bishop, somewhat roughly coloured, and of no particular merit. In the little south transept there is a curious and interesting altar tomb with the date A.D. 1579, and a wooden tablet partly coloured, of the date 1648. The inscription is curious, and deserves to be studied.

The chapel is full of graves, and many of the slabs which cover these are well preserved, with inscriptions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but none of them of any real historical interest. A very small but tasteful little slab fixed about the middle of the south wall commemorates Miss Dorothea Beale, the great female educationist, who founded and developed the great Ladies' College at Cheltenham. This is the solitary exception of the hospitality of the tomb being offered in Gloucester Cathedral to any person for many long years. Her ashes were interred hard by the little tablet. Her pre-eminent merits as one of the noblest pioneers of female education well merited this recognition.

The general idea and the dedication of this striking "annexe" to the cathedral, of course, marked it out as a special object of the iconoclastic fury of the Puritan soldiers of Oliver Cromwell, and the utter destruction of the beautiful reredos of this fair Lady Chapel shows how bitter was the feeling of the Parliamentary garrison. It is surprising, however, that more mischief was not perpetrated here by these fanatical destroyers.

It seems as though some powerful and influential influence interfered with and stayed the destroyers' mischievous hands before more ruin was wrought. It is clear that

here, as in other parts of the noble building, notably, as we have remarked, in the tower, something arrested the fury of the Cromwellian soldiery, and rescued the beautiful work from the utter destruction which at one time evidently threatened it.

Besides the superb reredos, the delicately carved sedilia in the sanctuary, and no doubt the stained glass of most of the windows, to which we must add the canopies of the lower niches, which are all more or less broken and defaced—little damage was really wrought in this glorious relique of the last work of the mediæval monk-architects and artists.

It is curious that only those parts of the Lady Chapel which could be easily reached by the pikes and muskets of the soldiers have been damaged. Of course, a few stones would have easily made an end of the painted glass.

All this shows us that when the soldiers had wreaked their first brief fury on the Lady Chapel, some powerful protecting hand interfered, and promptly removed the fanatical invaders from the building—hence its general preservation.



## CHAPTER X

### THE ANCIENT TILES IN GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL

"No church in England"—writes Mr. Porter, one of the chief experts on the question of "Ancient Encaustic Tiles"—"can show a greater number of encaustic tiles than Gloucester Cathedral." These are most likely generally of Worcestershire manufacture, and they date for the most part from A.D. 1400 to 1460.

The most notable "tiled" pavement is in front of the high altar in the choir, one half of which remains as it was originally laid by Abbot Seabroke, *circa* A.D. 1455.

Among the specially interesting tiles in this ancient pavement will be found the two coats-of-arms of Richard Earl of Cornwall, the second son of King John; one, the well-known lion rampant for Poitou; the other with the eagle displayed, which he bore as King of the Romans.

These tiles, however, do not date as far back as A.D. 1256 when this prince was elected King of the Romans. They are apparently very ancient copies of the original pieces, and here and in other churches were used solely for their decorative effect: this was evidently the case with many of the "tiles" still remaining in various parts of the cathedral.

But some were doubtless placed here as marks of respect to benefactors and friends of the abbey; for instance, the famous arms of the houses of De Clare and De Spenser are not infrequent; by these great families the earldom of Gloucester was for a time held.

Several "tiles" commemorate the various abbots who ruled in the great monastery, and bear their arms. Others are ornamented with various sacred emblems.

It is probable that certain of the Gloucester "tiles" were brought to the abbey from New Llanthony, when that priory was dissolved.

In the ancient library of the deanery there is a fine fifteenth-century pavement in admirable preservation. The room in question is very old, and dates undoubtedly from the latter years of the eleventh century. Some experts believe that this deanery pavement is *in situ*, and was laid at some unknown pre-Reformation date.

Besides the beautiful pavement in front of the high altar, ancient mediæval "tiles" still exist in considerable numbers in the Lady Chapel before the altar, in the chauntry of Abbot Malvern, leading out of the north ambulatory of the choir; in the chauntry chapel of the south transept, and in the chapel leading out of the north ambulatory of the choir, usually known as Abbot Boteler's Chapel.

Beneath the solid stone pavement in the nave, which has been already noticed, and which was laid down in 1740, there are probably many ancient "tiles" which would deserve careful inspection.

Although the vast majority of the many "tiles" now existing and visible in the cathedral are generally of the date of A.D. 1400-1460, in the south-eastern chapel of the south triforium, among various interesting reliquiæ which have been gathered together in this little "museum" of early remains, which include specimens of old carving—pillars, panels—carved pilasters of an early eighteenth-century reredos, etc., are one or two most ancient tiles which have been found and treasured up, probably of the Norman period.

## REMAINS OF OLD GLASS IN THE CATHEDRAL

Besides the great east window of the choir, which is virtually intact, and the east window of the Lady Chapel, which although fragmentary still is entirely made up of ancient glass, there are but few remains of the old pre-Reformation stained glass in the cathedral.

The most considerable of these "remains" are in the two upper windows of the south transept, where some brilliant ruby glass of the Decorated period, *circa* 1330, or slightly earlier, is still preserved; it consists of a white scroll work of vine leaves on a beautiful ruby ground in the heads, and plain quarries with simple borders below. This is probably the oldest stained glass in the cathedral.

Besides these, the tops of the canopies, the *rose en soleil*, the Yorkist badge, in the side windows of the Lady Chapel, and also in the east end window, have been already noticed.

Some small fragments of old painted glass remain in the clerestory windows of the nave. In the nave too, in the north aisle (reckoning from west to east), in the third and fifth windows, there is a good deal of old painted glass—the silvery radiance of these windows, marking them out from the others, is remarkable.

In the north transept east window, a little of the old glass remains. In the singular and very beautiful window in the lower story of the tower at the west end of the choir there are considerable fragments of the original glazing.

Of *modern glass*, stained and painted, in the cathedral, while there is much that is regrettable and poor—of which the most conspicuous example is the great west window of the nave—there are, however, some very notable exceptions. The new windows of Whall in the Lady Chapel are among the noblest examples in England of modern

glass—the figures, with rare exceptions, being exquisite. These windows, too, glow with rich and delicate colouring. The six windows of Kempe in the ambulatories of the choir, three on each side, are also good examples of this eminent master in the craft of glass painting; the same may be said of Kempe's great west window in the north transept. The large west window of the south transept by Clayton and Bell is also a noble example of modern work. The modern glass in the east chapel of the south ambulatory of the choir (Clayton and Bell) is also good and pleasing.

The large north and south windows at the end of the north and south transepts, both by Hardman, are good; the one in the north transept especially so, but it is, perhaps, a little over-crowded with figures.

Perhaps the most conspicuous fault in the work of Kempe, above alluded to, of which the cathedral has many good examples, is that he indulges in too much canopy work. This exaggeration of what was certainly a peculiarity in the glass of the Perpendicular school, often gives an impression of heaviness and monotony to the windows of this really great modern master.

It is true that in the glorious east window of the choir the canopies in the upper lights are very large, but the colour in these canopies is so rich and glowing, and at the same time so translucent, that any criticism here would be utterly misplaced. The canopies of Kempe, on the other hand, are very large and heavy, and are generally sadly wanting in colour and brilliancy.





## CHAPTER XI

### THE CLOISTERS AND THE BUILDINGS LEADING DIRECTLY OUT OF THE CLOISTERS

THE extraordinary magnificence often displayed in certain of the more considerable cloisters in England and on the Continent of Europe is remarkable. We have in Gloucester a famous example.

The present cloisters were adorned and partially rebuilt in the Perpendicular style by Abbot Horton, A.D. 1351-1377, and the new work was generally completed by Abbot Froucester, A.D. 1381-1412. They replaced other and less ornate work dating mostly from Norman times; the outer walls, however, of the older Norman cloisters still remain.

Although the mediæval monastic furniture—the wooden seats and desks of the carrels in the south alley, where the monks worked and wrote, and the various curtains dividing the several parts of the cloister alleys are gone; although the beautiful panelling of the fourteenth and early part of the fifteenth centuries is sorely defaced and scarred; these cloisters, in spite of the sad appearance of desolation, which a long unused building always presents, are still one of the architectural gems of northern Europe.

Every portion of them, happily, is still sufficiently preserved to enable us to trace accurately the old sites once occupied by monks and novices, when these cloisters were the heart and centre of the great Benedictine community, which dwelt and worked here until the day when

Henry VIII. dissolved and finally broke up the famous religious house of Gloucester, A.D. 1540.

Their chief glory now is *the roof*, which replaced the old covering—no doubt of wood. Traces of the partial destruction of this original wooden roof are still visible in the great chapter house, where, in the western wall, the stonework is reddened by the flames which some time prior to the fourteenth century destroyed portions of the old Norman wooden work.

The cloisters are now ceiled in every part with massive stone—a roof of the style known as fan-tracery vaulting. No vaulting has ever been designed by any school of builders which presents so splendid an appearance as this peculiar form. It is especially an English “use,” and was an early development of the Perpendicular artists. It seems to have been a reaction against the excessive severity and austerity of the older Perpendicular style. Probably from its extreme costliness it never became common.

With some modifications, we find noble examples of this perfect form of a Gothic roof in Henry VII.’s Chapel at Westminster, in the gorgeous work of King’s College Chapel at Cambridge, and in S. George’s Chapel, Windsor. There are a few other fine examples in England, but these are the most notable.

The beautiful Gloucester cloister is, however, the earliest known example of this peculiarly rich vaulting. It is probable that to the Architectural School of Gloucester is owing the invention of this, the noblest kind of Gothic roofing.

We will describe in order the four walks or “alleys”—which is the more technical term for these cloister walks—briefly touching upon the notable apartments or buildings immediately leading from them; some of which are



*Photo.*

*A. H. Pitcher, Gloucester*

### THE CLOISTERS, SOUTH ALLEY

Showing the Carrels where the monks read or wrote. The Fan-tracery Roof is the earliest example of the style, which was invented by the Gloucester mason-artists.





with us still, while others were totally destroyed when Henry VIII. suppressed the ancient monastery, as "superfluous buildings."

### THE EAST CLOISTER ALLEY

This is usually entered first, a large doorway opens into it at the extreme east end of the nave of the cathedral.

A little way down this east cloister, on the right side, is a door, partly glazed, which takes the place of a somewhat large entrance arch, still visible, which was apparently closed up when the cloister was remodelled and redecorated in the fourteenth century. This door leads into a wide vaulted passage, chiefly of very early Norman date. The passage is ornamented with a wall-arcade on each side, and is roofed with a plain barrel vault without ribs—now very rough and quite devoid of any of the ancient ornament which probably once decorated it. On the arches there are still some few vestiges of a very early colouring. The passage leads to the outer garden, and to the old cemetery of the monks. In the *Rites of Durham* there is a very interesting entry which gives us some clue to the original purpose of this most ancient passage from the cloister to the garden. The entry in the *Rites* tells us that the monks were accustomed every day after dinner to pass through the cloister into the cemetery garden, and to remain there in the garden of death for some time, bare-headed, praying amongst the tombs for their brethren buried there. The "entry" goes on to state that this was their daily practice.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Rites of Durham*.—The book of the *Rites of Durham*, containing a description of the rites and customs of the Monastical Church of Durham before the suppression, was written in A.D. 1593, and was printed in A.D. 1892 by the Surtees Society from trustworthy MSS. Dom Gasquet,

Close to the entrance of this little ancient cloister is the Norman-Romanesque doorway opening into the chapter house. This entrance is ornamented with beautiful Norman work, which was left untouched when the cloister was remodelled in the fourteenth century. The Norman-Romanesque work here most happily harmonises with the newer Perpendicular panelling. The chapter house itself is very large, and is unchanged from Norman times, save at the east end, which was, for some unknown reason, rebuilt and altered in the fifteenth century. The roof of the vast chamber is a lofty barrel vault, carried by three great pointed arches. These pointed arches are an enigma to antiquaries—for the roof is evidently Norman, and the pointed arches must have been added at some very early date; but when or wherefore is quite uncertain. The west end abutting on the cloister is arranged in the usual Benedictine fashion, with a central door flanked originally by two windows, only one of which remains, the other being covered up with the Perpendicular panel-work. There are three Norman windows above. The lower part of this western wall, abutting on the cloister, is reddened by the flames that destroyed portions of the woodwork of the earlier cloister, perhaps in the fire of 1132.

An unvarying tradition tells us that in this chapter house the Conqueror, wearing "his crowned helm," held

the well-known and honoured R.C. historian, accurately describes the *Rites* as a document which stands alone as a connected account of a great English monastic community, at the epoch of its dissolution. It is the acknowledged work of one who had personal information, and had actually seen what he describes.

Of course the state of things described in the *Rites* refers to a comparatively late period of monastic life, still the customs, practices, and ritual pictured in the *Rites* no doubt fairly represent, with some modifications, the cloister life led for centuries in the great centres of the historical Benedictine order.

that "deep speech" with his Witan, which led to the making of the Domesday Book.

Some time between ten and eleven every morning, after the first Mass, all the members of the Benedictine House assembled in this chapter house, where business connected with the community was transacted; questions of discipline were brought before them, and sometimes punishment was inflicted; a short address or instruction was given by the abbot or by one deputed by him. The stone seats on which the brethren used to sit during this formal daily meeting are still visible.

Beneath the floor of the chapter house, certain of the great Norman soldiers, companions of the Conqueror, were buried. In Leland's time, *circa* A.D. 1540-1541, the names of some of these were legible on the walls near their gravestones. They can be still read. Three of them were well-known contemporaries of William the Conqueror, viz., Roger, Earl of Hereford, Bernard de Newmarch, and Walter de Lacey. De Lacey, we know, was buried in this chapter house with great ceremony as early as 1085.

Further down this east alley is the door which once led up a flight of stairs to the dormitory where the monks slept. This was a vast building completely destroyed by Henry VIII. as "superfluous." Only a little fragment remains—a jamb of one of the windows; this can be still seen from the garden outside, on the north-east corner of the chapter house.

Immediately beneath the dormitory was originally a large chamber called the Common Room, which was entered from the cloister by the door which led to the dormitory. In this chamber, during the winter months, there was a fire for the monks who wrote and taught in the cloister to come and warm themselves at.

## THE NORTH CLOISTER ALLEY

At the east end of this north cloister is a doorway of Early English architecture, leading into a vaulted (Early English) passage that led to the infirmary, and at a later date to the abbot's new lodging, built in the reign of Edward III. The abbot's new lodging was barbarously destroyed when the present episcopal palace was erected in A.D. 1862. The abbot's lodging of Edward III.'s time, erected in the first half of the fourteenth century, does not appear to have been a beautiful or even a striking building, but it doubtless contained many highly-interesting details. Nothing now remains save the bare wall, which separates the palace from Pitt Street, containing the framework of some fine ancient windows.

The infirmary was evidently a large and somewhat imposing pile. It was virtually destroyed by the officials of Henry VIII. The remains of some really fine arches are still with us—some in the garden of the bishop's palace, but the major part outside the garden.

These arches are conspicuous objects; they have been restored, but they have been unhappily and tastelessly dealt with, and as a recent architectural critic has described them, "left as perfect, as neat, and as unromantic as a cemetery mason could have desired." The apartments of the monk-superior of the infirmary, a high obedientiary of the house, and other officers of the infirmary, now form part of one of the canonical residences.

The great extent and importance of the infirmary buildings surprises some, but it must be remembered that it was not simply a hospital for the sick; it was there that the infirm brethren of the monastery dwelt, and all the monks who had professed fifty years, and who in their latter years lived under a less rigid rule, also dwelt there.



The little enclosed garden on the left of the passage leading to the infirmary was probably originally the herbarium or herb garden attached to the infirmary buildings.

Adjoining this little "herb" garden are several mediæval houses of various dates. Before the suppression these were, no doubt, offices and store-houses immediately connected with the refectory of the monastery, and included the residences of the various obedientiaries, or monastic officials, placed over this department. In a great community like that of Gloucester these were necessarily of considerable size; for not only were the regular dwellers in the monastery to be provided for, but there was a perpetual stream of guests, pilgrims and others, many of them poor, who were constantly being entertained in the ever-open and hospitable apartments set apart for this purpose in the great religious house.

Returning to the north cloister alley—at the farther end (west corner) is another large Early English doorway—now filled up by a modern window of very poor stained glass. It still possesses the upper pair of iron hooks on which the doors were originally hung. This was the entrance to a flight of steps leading into the great dining hall of the monks, called "refectoryum," the "frater," which is the common English equivalent for the Latin *refectorium*, and is the old term always applied to the monastic dining hall; "fraytour" is the word used by Chaucer for the modern English term "refectory."

The "refectoryum" of Gloucester was a great hall, over one hundred and thirty feet long, and nearly forty feet broad, and stood over an extensive range of cellars. It has all disappeared, having been destroyed, at the period of the suppression, as a "superfluous" building.

The whole of the eastern end of this north cloister for more than half its length was used for the novices'

school. This novices' quarter was probably originally closed in by heavy leathern curtains. We have curious evidence that this portion of the north cloister belonged to the novices, in the traces of their games. On the stone bench against the wall are scratched a number of game-boards—"Nine-men's Morris" and "Fox and Geese," etc., at which the boys used to play in their leisure hours.

But the great feature of this most interesting north cloister alley is the monks' lavatory at the west end. This is the most beautiful and perfect of its date that has been preserved in England. Its roof is vaulted with exquisite fan tracery—a miniature copy of the great cloister roof. Opposite the lavatory is a groined recess or almery, where the towels used to be hung. The towel recess was closed by doors, the hooks of the hinges still remain. Above the doors is open carved work—in order to give "ayre to the towels."

### THE WEST CLOISTER ALLEY

There is nothing specially remarkable in this alley till we come to the extreme south end. On the west side is an

old doorway with a flight of steps leading to the apartments of the abbot—later the dwelling of the prior. This ancient lodging of the principal resident dignitary of the community is now the deanery. This was in old days the abbot's, then the prior's lodgings. Its west and south



"ONCE THE PRIOR'S LODGINGS"

fronts show a picturesque combination of Early English Decorated and Perpendicular styles. The interior consists of two main blocks built on two sides of a court. The south block, which contained the private apartments of the abbot, consists of three large Norman chambers (these have been subdivided) one above the other, with their original windows enriched with zigzag mouldings. The west block of buildings has been a good deal altered in the sixteenth century, and later, probably by Laud, who was for six years Dean of Gloucester. The rich panelling in the drawing-room is certainly the work of Laud.

It was here that royal persons, high ecclesiastics, and nobles were entertained. It is more than probable that the deanery was the scene



WINDOW OF NORMAN - ROMANESQUE  
LIBRARY IN THE DEANERY—RECAST  
IN FOURTEENTH CENTURY

of the hurried appointment of Anselm as Archbishop of Canterbury, by William Rufus. In one of its chambers took place the "historic scene" (related above) between Abbot Thokey and Prince Edward — afterwards king. Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn resided here for some days. Here, too, in one of the chambers Richard II. presided over the barons and abbots in the famous Parliament of A.D. 1378.

The most remarkable apartment in the deanery, however, is the great Romanesque barrel-vaulted chamber on the south of the private apartments of the abbot, generally, but mistakenly, termed the "chapel" — this it never could have been. It is far too large for the abbot's chapel, and although it is in a state of perfect preservation, there are absolutely no signs whatever of its ever having been a chapel. It was more probably the abbot's hall, or state apartment. It cannot be dated much later than A.D. 1080-1085.

On the whole, this deanery must rank as one of the oldest, perhaps the oldest, dwelling-house in England.

At the south end of this alley is a flight of steps leading into a vaulted chamber of some size, of very early Norman date, unrestored; this was the main entrance to the cloister from the outer court. It served as the outer parlour. In it the monks were permitted to break the rule of silence which was observed in the cloister. Here, too, merchants were permitted "to utter their wares." Objects of interest and curiosity were here purchased by the monks; possibly also animals, which occasionally were possessed as pets in the religious house, were brought here for sale. This early vaulted chamber stood under part of the great barrel-vaulted room of the deanery above referred to, and is of the same most ancient date.



At the extreme south end of this west alley is the large procession door into the church.

### THE SOUTH ALLEY OF THE CLOISTER

The principal objects of interest in this south alley are the carrels, little open cells, where the more studious monks sat and read and, no doubt, often wrote. There are twenty of these curious carrels—absolutely perfect, save that the original wooden fittings have disappeared.

Silence was rigidly observed here, but as we learn from the "*Coutûmes de Cluny*," a monk attendant paced up and down and attended to the requirements of the student monks. Silence was ever observed, and if a religious book was required, the monk beckoned with his hand to the attendant official. If a classical or profane work was wanted, the student made a sign to the attendant—the sign was, that he scratched his ear like a dog!

The remains of book-closets (two in number) can be still clearly traced in the garth, or garden, round which the cloisters are built. These book-closets are near the south-east corner.

The monastic library—a comparatively late addition to the religious house—was, no doubt, arranged towards the end of the fourteenth century, when the number of books was multiplied. This library is a large and interesting room of the fourteenth century, and is still used as the cathedral library, and is entered by a stone staircase leading from the east cloister alley—and also by a stair in the north transept of the cathedral.

THE GARTH, OR GARDEN, IN THE CENTRE OF THE  
CLOISTERS

In the centre of the four cloister alleys is a fair garden. This garden was always found in the centre of the cloisters. Sometimes this cloister garden was a simple grass plot with trees; sometimes it was bright with flowers.

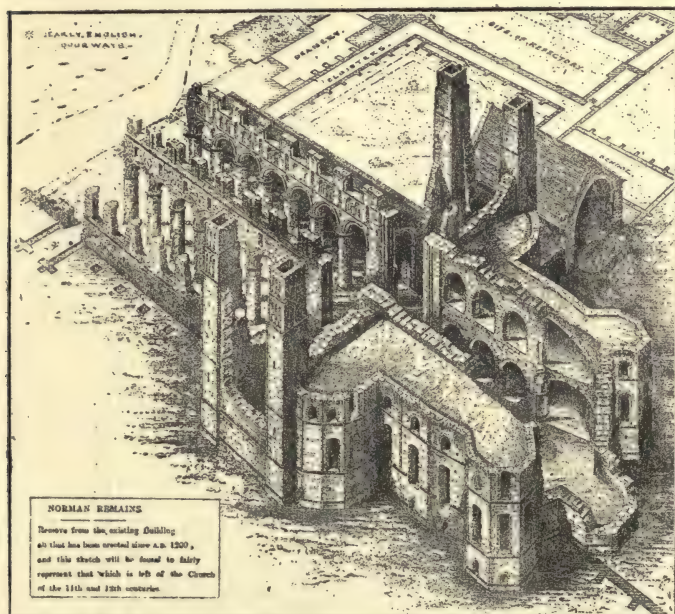
Few gardens in England possess such a far-back record as the Gloucester "garth," or garden. It certainly dates from the days of the Conqueror; not improbably from the time of Edward the Confessor and Aldred.

Here, as in most of the Benedictine cloister gardens, we find the well—a "memory" of the old atrium well, where, in the first days of the Faith, the worshippers performed their ablutions before entering the church. The holy water stoup found in all Roman Catholic churches is, too, a "memory" of the same atrium well.

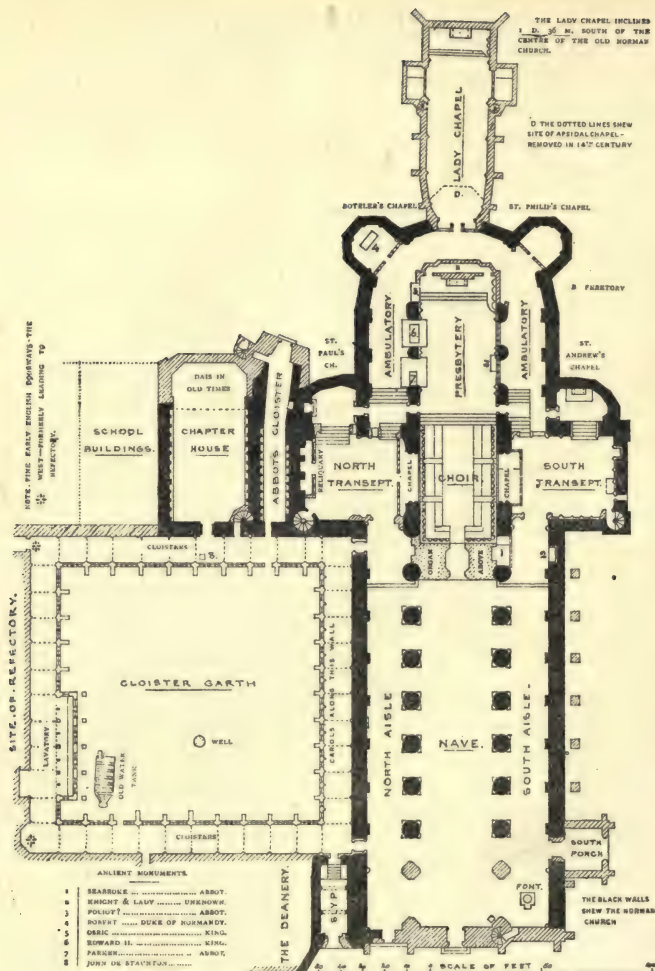
When Richard II. was king, and assembled his famous Parliament at Gloucester, the *Historia* tells us that this garden, which the compiler of the *Historia* calls the "viridum claustrum" (the green lawn of the cloister), was all trampled down and spoilt by the crowds attached to the court, who passed and repassed to and from the prior's lodging (the deanery), where the king lodged for some weeks and where he held his councils.

For many, many years this old fair garden was utterly neglected, was long used as a kitchen garden, then forgotten altogether and left utterly desolate. It is once more a garden, and is a dream of beauty and of "memories."

It is from this storied "viridum claustrum," this beautiful quiet spot, that the best view of the lordly tower and its magnificence, and the little known north side of the great cathedral, is obtained.



THIS SKETCH (BY F. S. WALLER) SHOWS THE REMAINS, STILL 'IN SITU,' OF THE NORMAN-ROMANESQUE CHURCH AS IT EXISTED IN THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES, NOW PARTLY VEILED WITH THE PANELLING ADDED IN THE FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES



## PLAN OF THE CATHEDRAL OF GLOUCESTER

The deep black lines show the original Norman-Romanesque Walls, still *in situ*, but in parts veiled with fourteenth-century work.



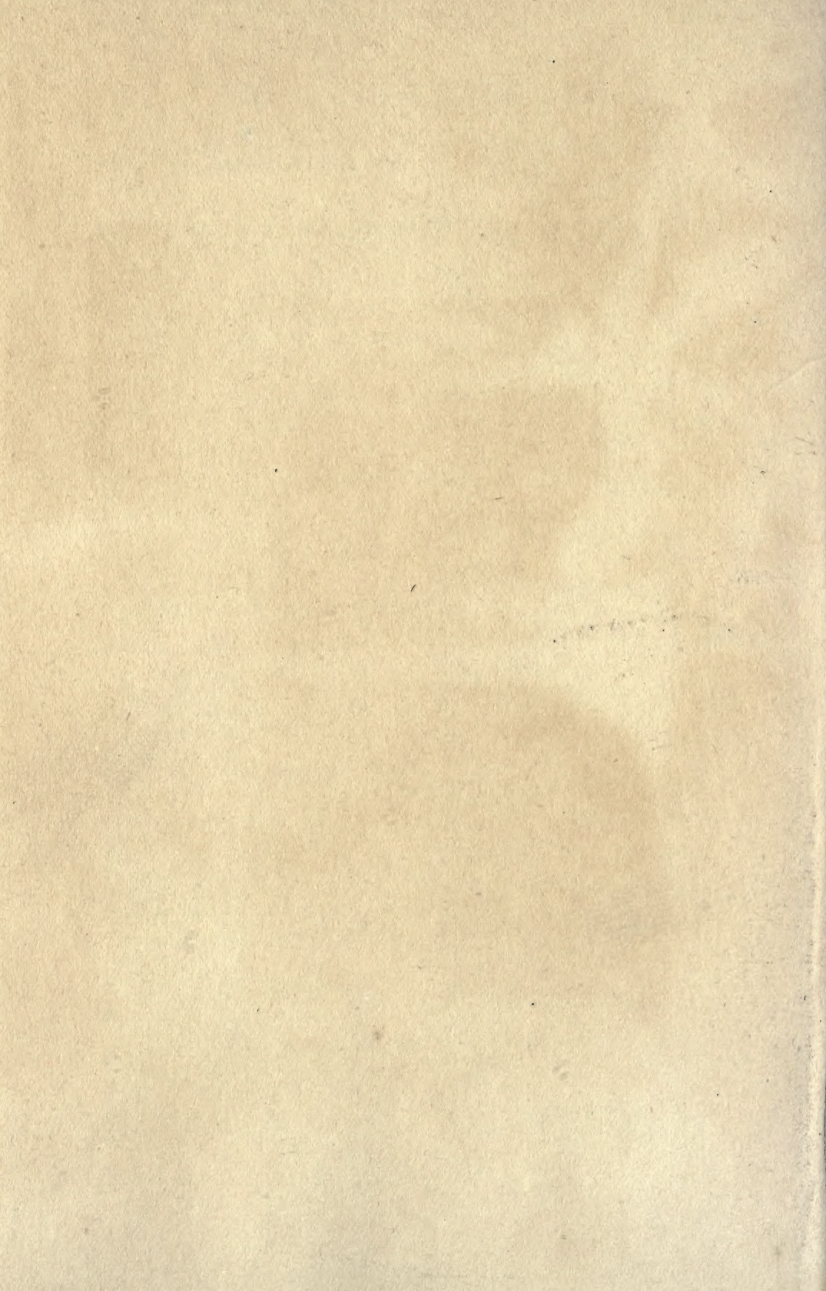
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